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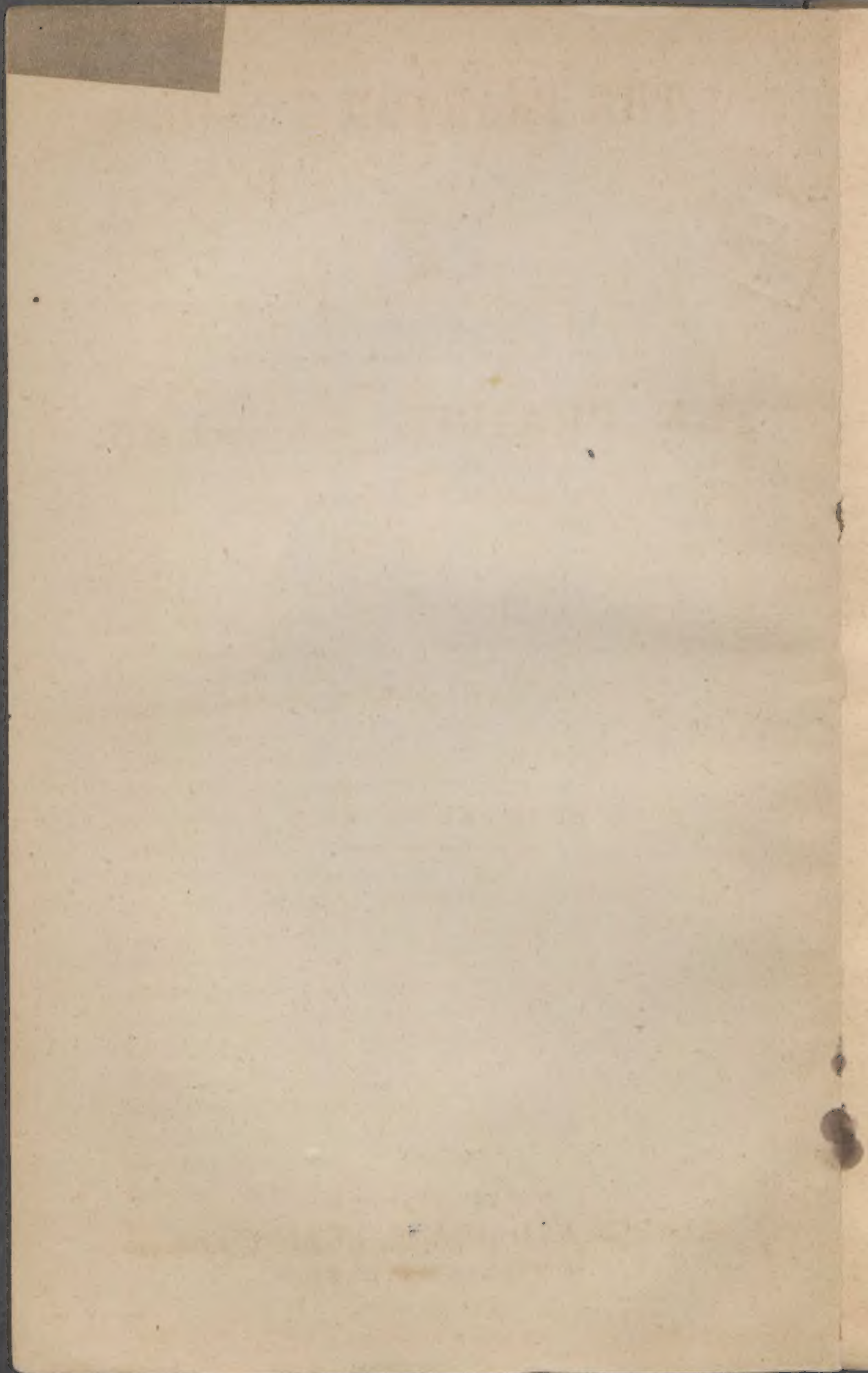
POCKET NOVELS



The Phantom Trail.



ED. S. ELLIS



THE PHANTOM TRAIL;

OR,

THE PRAIRIE RANGERS.

BY EDWARD S. ELLIS.

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THE PHANTOM TRAIL;

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CHAPTER I.

THE PHANTOM.

It was on a hot summer day, in the month of June, that the

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THE PHANTOM TRAIL;
OR,
THE PRAIRIE RANGERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRAVELERS.

It was on a fine summer day, in 1850, that I reined my horse up, and from my position took a survey of the surrounding prairie.

That morning I had crossed the Missouri River into what is now Nebraska Territory; and now as the day was drawing to a close, and as I had placed many a mile behind me, I cast about for a suitable place to make my first "encampment" on the prairie. Wearied as I was with my long ride, I could but take in all the exhilarating pleasure of the majestic scene before me. The predominant variety of surface was the rolling or undulatory, so often compared to the ocean. The scenery, however, was varied enough to prevent any sensation of monotony. Looking to the westward, the prairie seemed limitless in extent, stretching away until earth and sky joined in the faint blue of the far-off horizon; but to the north and south, belts of timber, and beyond these the misty outlines of an extensive forest were visible, and still away beyond, like a mass of peaked clouds resting in the sky, towered the summit of the Black Hills.

My horse stood upon a piece of rising ground, looking down from which a river was visible, flowing eastward into the Missouri, and although of a size that would have made it of first importance in the Old World, still, in the

vast territory of our continent, its significance as yet is not sufficient to win it a name. It was several hundred yards away, and the murmur of its current, as it glided over its pebbly bed, was plainly audible. Its banks were partially fringed by timber, among which the cotton-wood predominated, and at a point hardly a furlong above me, this timber thickened so sensibly as to entitle itself to the name of a grove.

While gazing mechanically at this collection of trees, I was startled to observe a thin, pointed column of smoke ascending from them, and blending in the clear air above. It arose perpendicularly until dissolved, and was so faint that had not I looked directly toward it, it would have escaped my observation altogether. Up to this time I was alone in this solitude, and the sudden discovery that another human being, at least, was at that moment within hailing distance, gave me a peculiarly unpleasant sensation which it is difficult to describe. I had fancied myself to be in the very heart of the West, when I was thus reminded that I was hardly beyond the pale of civilization.

From the slowness with which the smoke filtered up through the tree-tops, and from the height which it had already attained, it was evident that the fire had already been burning several hours. The stillness with which this manifestation of another presence went on was to me its most expressive feature. Had I heard a shot, the crackling of the burning wood, or the whinney of a horse, it would have had a far different effect; or had the vapor increased in density, as though additional fuel was heaped upon the flame, it would have been a slight relief. But no such thing occurred, and the most studied listening failed to detect the slightest sound, save that of the faintly murmuring river.

Among all the emotions that I experienced, I do not think that of *fear* occurred. Despite my fanciful penetration into the Great West, I knew I had not progressed far enough to have cause for apprehension from hostile Indians, and the idea of a white man in the solitude being other than a friend and welcome companion, never once

entered my mind. Still the uncertainty made me hesitate a long time before riding forward. My own situation was such that I could be easily seen from the grove, and in the hope of attracting attention toward myself, I coughed several times, and spoke in a loud tone to my horse. If, indeed, a pair of human eyes were gazing at me from the timber, their owner was so carefully concealed that I learned nothing of him.

At length I determined to ride boldly forward to the fire, and make myself known to whomsoever was in the grove. My horse descended the hill, crossed a small, open plain to the river bank, and ascending this a short distance, was soon making his way among the trees. By this time the sun was just sinking and twilight was already enveloping the river and prairie. I had proceeded but a few yards, when the glimmering of the camp-fire was seen, and in another moment I had risen up and dismounted.

I was not a little taken back when I gazed around, and saw that I was entirely alone. The fire, to all appearance, had been untouched for hours, and it was with a feeling of keen disappointment that I reflected, in all probability he who had kindled it was many miles away. However, a more suitable resting place could not be found, and with the resolve to make full use of it, I unfastened the girths of any saddle, and commenced making my preparations accordingly.

I had scarcely begun thus, when I startled by a deep bass, and not unpleasant salutation of "Good evening, friend!"

I turned, and beheld in the dim twilight before me, one of the most manly and prepossessing figures I ever met. He approached me, and with a frank, cordial smile, extended his hand, and warmly shook my own. Of course, I could not notice every peculiarity of dress and appearance at that time, but I describe him now as I afterward saw him. He was a man about thirty years of age, rather tall of stature, apparently without an ounce of superfluous flesh, and yet not too attenuated to be graceful.

He had dark, hazel eyes, a small, well-shaped Roman nose and finely-turned head, the hair of which was thin and silky in texture, and being always combed, and neatly parted at the back, after the fashion of the present day, helped to give him the appearance of a man, who, although beyond the confines of civilized society, still had not forgotten its usages and customs. Two-thirds of his face was covered by a beard of jet blackness, which was kept trimmed, and not permitted to acquire that enormous length so often seen in the West. His dress was entirely a "civilized" one, and had been made for its present use. It was similar to that worn by sportsmen, save that, perhaps, it was more durable and costly; the boots, being of the finest workmanship, rising to the knees, and enclosing the pants. One thing more should be noted—the man possessed a fine education, and was a gentleman in the truest sense of the term.

"Good evening," I returned. "Seeing no one when I rode up, I was afraid I should be compelled to encamp alone to-night."

"I saw you approaching, and just stepped behind a tree to obtain a good view of you."

"And how did the view suit you?" I laughed.

"Very well, indeed."

"And so I can say in sincerity does mine, especially when, instead of a rude, uncultivated hunter or trapper, I find a man evidently of culture and refinement."

"Waiving all compliments for the present, my first duty is hospitality. Your horse only needs picketing to provide for him. I have just cooked a good haunch of venison, which we will share together."

Taking my horse by the bridle, he led him further into the grove, where his own was picketed, and after securing him for the night, returned to the fire, and replenished it. Then picking up a piece of steaming meat, which lay a short distance from the fire, upon a quantity of fresh leaves, he severed it in the middle, and offered me one half. The flavor showed that he was no tyro in the way of cooking,

and the supper that I ate that night was never exceeded in enjoyment by anything that I have partaken since.

By the time our evening meal was finished, night had shut down around us, and the grove was of inky blackness, save where the red glow of our camp-fire made its way. Our pipes were produced, and rolling our blankets beneath us, so that we could recline upon them, we stretched out upon opposite sides of the embers, and looking across to each other through the volumes of smoke that curled up from our pipes, I rather remarked than asked—

“We have not yet reached a point where we have cause to fear Indians.”

“No; we may make two or three days’ journey before feeling any apprehension. Should a roaming band of Puncabs or Sioux come upon us, it might require some vigilance to prevent our property from being stolen. But that would be all the trouble they would give us.”

“And is there no cause to believe such a band in the vicinity?”

“Possible, but not probable. It is not the season when they are engaged in hunting, and nothing but accident could bring them in this section.”

“Then you have not seen the ‘red men’ as yet?” I asked, more for the purpose of gaining some knowledge of my friend, than of obtaining a direct reply to the question.

“Do you mean during the present journey, or do you ask whether I have seen them at all?” said he, looking me in the face.

“Whether you have seen them at all?”

“Ah, my friend,” he answered, with another of his winning smiles, “if you think I have not met the genuine North American Indian—not one of these filthy dogs that infest the border, but the wild savage himself,—you are greatly mistaken. It is no boasting for me to say there is hardly a tribe of any importance west of the Mississippi, which, at some time or other, I have not met. I have crossed the plains to California more than once.”

"And, I trust, found enough of the yellow metal to repay you?"

"It was not gold that drew me thither," he replied with a serious face.

"Not gold that drew you thither?" I repeated in astonishment. "What then, could it have been? I beg pardon," I added, as I noticed his gravity. "I did not mean to hurt your feelings."

"No apology is necessary; your curiosity is natural."

"You have traveled a great deal then in the Far West," I remarked, anxious to turn the conversation.

"Considerably; I have journeyed as far as the Dalles of the Columbia, in the North-West, and as far in the South-West as Sante Fe. Over most of the ground comprehended between our present situation and those two points, I have passed at some time or other. In fact I think I can properly term myself a *Prairie Ranger*."

"It must have required a number of years to do that."

"Very true. Ever since 1842—eight years—with now and then a flying visit to my home, I have been on the plains or mountains. My wanderings for the first four years were confined to the territory east of the Rocky Mountains; but in the summer of 1847 I passed down the western slope, and for almost two years ranged through that wild and almost unknown country. It may no doubt seem singular to you, sir, that so much of my life should be spent in such a manner, when I state that my parents are living, and that my circumstances are as comfortable and promising as I could possibly wish."

"It most certainly does."

"But during all those eight years I have had an object—the same object that is leading me forward this minute. I will state, however, that, whether successful or not, this is the last journey I shall ever make to the Far West."

These remarks of my friend, as may be naturally supposed, excited in no small degree my curiosity. I felt almost willing to do anything to ascertain who he was, and what it was that excited so potent an influence upon his life. It must have been something extraordinary in the

highest degree, for he possessed a powerful mind, and one that could not be swayed by trivial incidents. But great as was the interest I felt, nothing in the world could have induced me to question him. The respect that he had inspired, told me that when he had sufficient confidence in myself, and when he judged the proper time had come, he would disclose as much as he thought proper. As yet I had not even learned his name, nor he mine, much less had we imparted our destinations and intentions. Believing it time for this to be done, I said:

"My friend, it occurs to me that there should be a little more freedom between us. We have met by accident, and each has professed himself interested in the other. I have considerable curiosity to learn your name, and also to know whether I shall be doomed to part company with you on the morrow."

"I hope not. My name then is Preston Kendall, and I reside in New Orleans. My destination at present is rather uncertain, but it will probably be the Saskatchewan of British America. Should there be a larger companionship between us, you will understand more of me."

"My own name is Warren Marewold, and I am a Buckeye. I have a father and several brothers living, but I have no sisters. My prospects in life are not such as to warrant ease and indolence, even were I so disposed. There are two causes for my appearance in this country, with my face turned westward. The first is a desire to better my worldly prospects; and the second is a hope of adventure, either of which perhaps exercises as much influence upon me as does the other."

"Have you any intention of making California your destination?"

"Had I been at liberty I might have done so a year or two ago, but I have given up all thoughts of going thither for the present. If you have no objections, I shall be glad to accompany you."

"Objections!" exclaimed Kendall, springing up, and catching my hand. "The last words you should utter to me. Oh, how often during my wanderings have I thought

that if I could only have a companion I could thank Heaven over and over again. I mean such a person as could be a companion—not a rough, unsociable hunter or trapper, such as I have spent a few days with, but a man like myself, with whom I can converse and exchange confidences, and be understood. And,” he added, reseating himself, “it shall not be a loss to you. You shall be abundantly compensated upon our return for the time spent with me.”

“I expect to be compensated,” said I, looking him steadily in the eye, “but not as you proposed just now. Your company is what leads me to go with you.”

“But Marewold,” said he, half rising in his earnestness, “this isn’t fair. Let me hire you. I am abundantly able to do it; and as I count upon your assistance in the accomplishment of my object, it is nothing but simple justice.”

“Let us waste no more words upon the matter. Although, as I said, I go with you for the sake of your company, it isn’t that alone. I have other objects, which will appear in time. Say nothing again of hiring me, for if you do, I shall look upon it as nothing more nor less than an insult.”

“That matter is settled then. This being the last journey I shall make, it must be the most pleasant, and if crowned with success, how well shall I be repaid for my years of toil and anxiety.”

“But if not successful why should it be your *last* journey?”

“For the reason that I then shall be convinced that it is hopeless to search—to journey farther. I have promised my parents that after this I shall remain with them.”

“I fervently hope, then, that your long *search* (I was careful to emphasize the word he had unwittingly used) may be rewarded by the discovery of its object, and not end in a disappointment at last.”

I smoked harder than ever after saying this, in hopes that the thick volumes of vapor would hide my face from him, for I knew his dark eyes were fixed upon me. A

furtive glance through a rift in the smoke showed me that he was quietly smiling, as though amused at the remark I had made.

"I see, like all our people, you possess your share of curiosity. Have patience, and in a few days you shall understand all."

The quiet, pleasant humor of this remark made me laugh in spite of myself.

"Don't think me vulgarly curious," said I. "I am content to wait your own time; but I judged you spoke a word it was not your intention to use, and I repeated it on purpose to see the effect it would produce. I had hard work to keep from laughing when you surveyed me with such a wondering expression. Now, as a guarantee of my intentions, I promise you that the subject shall not be again referred to by me until you have introduced it yourself."

"Such a promise is unnecessary; but as we have had quite a long conversation, suppose we turn in for the night."

I assenting, to my joyful surprise, instead of lying down at once, he produced a small pocket Bible, and leaning forward so that the fire shone upon its pages, he read, in his deep, impressive monotone, a chapter of the Book of Revelations. I kneeled with him upon the ground, and we two joined our prayers together.

CHAPTER II.

FORT LARAMIE—A FAMOUS CHARACTER, AND AN AMUSING OCCURRENCE—EN ROUTE AGAIN.

In the afternoon of the next day we struck the Platte River, which, it will be remembered, the great overland trail to Oregon follows to its source near the South Pass. And here, although fairly out upon the prairies, we seemed in a thickly populated country, for at that day a perfect flood of emigration was pouring westward to the Pacific

coast, and I do not recollect that we were once out of sight of some train, and often the trail seemed alive with them. We sometimes kept them company for a mile or so, but as their progress was much slower than we wished to travel, we left them at the end of that distance and hurried forward. All night their camp-fires could be seen twinkling in different directions, and we made it a point to remain with some of them until morning. We conversed, and formed the acquaintance of many, and I made numerous inquiries about "home," as we termed the States; but in every case, I found that my crossing the Mississippi was subsequent to theirs, and that instead of receiving, I imparted information.

On the second day we reached the "Fort," which stands upon the south bank of the Platte, and which has long been an important station in the West. We found a great crowd of emigrants here, as the travel was unusually great. Hunters and trappers too, were lounging around the outside, smoking, chatting, telling stories and gambling. Each new comer was surveyed with idle curiosity as he came up, and remarks freely made about the appearance of himself and animal. It was easy to see that more than one eye was attracted by the superb condition of our horses, and as we dismounted, a crowd gathered around us.

"Strangers, where might yer be from?" asked a huge, burly-looking hunter, leaning on his long rifle, and squinting one eye at us.

"From the East," replied Kendall.

"What might be the news in them quarters?"

"Nothing, I believe, of importance," he answered, facing around toward the crowd, and leaning gracefully against his horse.

"Fine animile you've got there, *rather*," pursued the hunter.

"Yes, I am quite proud of him," said Kendall, turning and looking at him, as though he had never noticed his fine points before.

"What might be the worra of such an animile?"

"I would not part with him at any price. He has been my constant companion for three years."

"Gentle?" asked the huge hunter, slyly approaching, and looking toward Kendall as he spoke.

"He is, in my presence, but when alone, he will permit no liberties."

The hunter opened the horse's lips, took a peep at his teeth, and then remarked, as he stepped back:

"Six years old, this year. The cussed Blackfeet stole my animal last winter, and I hain't set eyes on such a beauty since. Couldn't induce you to part with him, eh?"

"It is no use to talk about it. A thousand dollars in gold would not buy him. But as you seem to admire him so much, my friend, suppose you mount him, and take a turn on the prairie."

Nothing loth, the huge hunter ventured into the saddle, and struck off toward the north. The crowd stood in silence until he had gone quite a distance, and then they commenced exchanging significant glances and smiles with each other. These smiles soon became broad grins, and at length, one of the company asked:

"Stranger, when do you expect your horse back?"

"He will be back," said Kendall, taking out a hunting-cased watch, and looking at it, "in less than half an hour."

"*Rather* guess not," said another, in a drawling tone. "Big Pete has been in want of a hoss for some time, and I shouldn't wonder if he's got him this time."

I turned towards Kendall with an expression of blank dismay, for I felt he had been duped, and his splended animal was irrevocably gone. He looked as cool and unconcerned as ever, before the grinning faces of the crowd.

"I understand your meaning, gentlemen," said he. "If 'Big Pete' isn't here before a half hour is up, I will give him that horse. Had I entertained any suspicion that it would be otherwise, he wouldn't have ridden off as he did."

"How'd you hindered him?"

Kendall tapped his rifle.

"*That* would have done it, as sure as I could have raised it to my shoulder."

This assertion, I saw, inspired a respect for my friend at once, but they were still incredulous about the return of Big Pete. To while away the time, they turned toward me:

"Don't you wish some one to ride *your* critter?"

"He carries his *owner* as a general thing, and nobody else," I replied.

The time passed away in a few more unimportant remarks, and finally one of the men asked, in a sarcastic tone:

"You, stranger! Ain't that half hour about up?"

Kendall looked at his watch.

"It lacks a few minutes, but he must be in sight by this time. Ah! yonder he is, sure enough."

All eyes were turned in the direction indicated, and all, to their undisguised astonishment, saw Big Pete approaching at a rapid gallop. In a moment he came up, and springing from the back of his animal, yielded the reins to Kendall, who asked:

"What do you think of him?"

"Fust rate; *headstrong*, howsumever."

This time, it was Kendall who indulged in the meaning smile. We were told afterward, that Big Pete really intended to ride off with the horse, and was congratulating himself upon the prize he had obtained, when, to his dismay, the animal turned round, and made for the Fort again. He shouted, commanded, kicked, and used every endeavor to bring him back, but it was of no avail; and, putting on as good a face as he could, he allowed him free rein, without suspecting that any one knew what he had attempted to do.

After this, we entered the enclosure of the Fort, which we found crowded with all sorts of people, busily engaged in business or conversation. Emigrants were continually arriving or departing; and there was a motley assemblage of hunters, trappers, half-breeds, and Indians, constantly at the Fort. We were walking around, when Kendall sud-

denly paused and pointed to a group, standing apart from the rest.

"Notice that group particularly," said he, "and tell me whether there is anything remarkable in the appearance of any that compose it."

There were four men in converse with one. The latter stood several feet from them, with arms folded, and as each addressed him, he turned a sharp, twinkling, grey eye upon him, and kept it there until he had finished speaking. He was below the medium stature, with a firm, compact frame, hair of sandy color, a light complexion, and smooth-shaven face. He was of modest demeanor, and there was a noticeable *something* in his appearance, but what it was I could not define.

"Well, what do you think of them?" asked Kendall.

"That small man, with arms folded, possesses an individuality which I think, would distinguish him in any situation."

"That is the fellow I wished you to see. Notice him closely, and tell me what sort of a personage you judge him to be."

"I should think," I returned, as I kept my eye upon the subject of our conversation, "that he is one of the founders of this Fort, a man of education and refinement, far superior in mind and culture to those with whom he is talking."

"It is little education he possesses, except that which he has picked up in his wanderings; but I will answer for his noble qualities of mind and heart."

"Who is he?"

"What sort of a hunter would you take him to be?"

"An indifferent one. I judge him to have little taste for the chase."

"Marewold, you probably consider me a traveler in the Far West, and perhaps I am; but if I had seen *one-half* that that fellow has, I should be satisfied. He has trapped and hunted, and fought Indians all over the territories, I might say; and there is not another man living who has the practical knowledge of the prairies and mountains west

of us, that he possesses. He has conducted Fremont three times across the Rocky Mountains, and is now living at Santa Fe. I hardly need tell you that that indifferent hunter is no less than KIT CARSON."

At the mention of this renowned hunter's name—a name which had been mentioned with admiration probably in every city, town and village of our country—I turned again toward him, and this time I examined his appearance thoroughly. I could hardly believe that I saw before me the famous mountaineer, who already had figured in a score of sensation novels, and I ventured to remark to Kendall that he was mistaken.

"I know him well," he replied. "I spent many an hour with him in Santa Fe. I will speak to him as soon as he is disengaged. Ah! here is some sport."

As he spoke, I noticed a large, verdant-looking fellow, fresh from the Arkansas canebrakes, who, with his hands forced deep down in his pockets, and mouth and eyes wide open, was slowly approaching the group, as though in doubt about something. Suddenly turning towards us, he said to Kendall:

"I heern tell some miles back that Kit Carson was at the Fort, but I hain't seen him yet. I was jest told he stood out yonder, but I'll be hanged if I see him! P'raps you might show me him."

"That small man, standing with arms folded," said Kendall, pointing out the genuine individual, "is the person you seek."

The Arkansas native replaced his hands in his pockets, and strode away toward the group, as though displeased with what had been told him. As he stepped up to Carson, his head and shoulders towered above him, and he seemed fully double his size and weight. Placing his hand on the shoulder of the Guide, he asked,

"I say, stranger, be you Kit Carson?"

The latter, with a pleasant smile, replied:

"That is my name."

An expression of disgust passed over the face of the Arkansas man as he surveyed the hunter from head to foot.

and from foot to head again. It was plain to see that he was disappointed. He would not believe that the man of whom he had heard so much, was the diminutive personage before him. No, it was impossible. Stepping up to him again, he said:

"Look'ere, stranger, 'tain't no use; you can't make me swaller that. You ain't the Kit Carson I'm looking for."

Carson understood the cause of this remark, and his fine eyes twinkled with humor, although his face wore a meek expression, as if afraid to impose upon the powerful Arkansas man. It happened that Big Pete at this moment was passing near by, and, with a significant gesture, Carson pointed toward him. A minute after Big Pete was followed and dogged by a dozen admiring persons, at the head of which was the native of Arkansas. He was satisfied that he had got hold of the right man at last, and he did not let him go until he had shaken hands with him, and heard some of his wonderful feats.

A few minutes after Kendail approached Carson. He was immediately recognized and greeted kindly, and when introduced, I received a gripe of the hand which fairly made me wince. Carson told us that he had arrived at the Fort a week before from Santa Fe, with a lot of mules and horses, for the purpose of trading them with the emigrants going West. He was accompanied by an old comrade named Goodell, and added that he expected to remain for several weeks yet. In speaking of the mistake made by the Arkansas man, he laughed heartily, and told us that such incidents often occurred, and amused him very much. When introduced to strangers, they were pretty sure to express disappointment at not finding him a perfect Hercules in stature.

As this was the first and last time that I ever met Kit Carson, and as I believe the reference to him will not prove uninteresting to my readers, I have introduced it in this place. It has no connection with the history I wish to record, save as an incident by the way.

We remained over night at the Fort, the greater part of which was spent by Kendail with two or three hunters. I

noticed that his conversation with them was earnest and thoughtful; and although I did not hear a word he said, I was satisfied it related to the object of his wanderings in the West. He was questioning to obtain information, and by his disappointed air, I saw he had failed to gain it.

That night I dreamed that Preston Kendall was a monomaniac—that he had spent his life in following a phantom which had led him to the frozen regions of Rapert's Land, to the far off source of the Saskatchewan, and through the wildest fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains. I saw him ascending dark, gloomy rivers, which "heard no sound save their own dashings;" I saw him wandering alone through the snowy caverns of unknown mountains, fearless alike of Indian and wild beast; I saw him engaged single-handed with the Camanches of the south, and the Blackfeet of the north, and the next moment he was tossed to and fro in the California Gulf, without paddle or companion. All this time he was lured onward by the same phantom which was never near, but always fleeing before him. Sometimes it shone on the summit of a mountain, and when he had toiled after it, it was flitting in the valley below; then it was on the mountain top again, and then gliding, like a shooting-star, up the dark bed of some silent river, and then once more dancing away over the prairie. All this time I felt a singular consciousness that the phantom had a *home*, a dwelling-place from which it started, and to which it returned at long intervals. At length, after years of search, Kendall found it. It seemed to struggle to flee from him, but it was held in his place. In a transport of joy he stretched out his arm to grasp it—it screamed—and I awoke!

It was broad daylight, and the Fort was all astir. The fragrant savor of cooking food came from a dozen different groups on the outside, and everything wore the busy air of preparation. The atmosphere was clear and invigorating, and good spirits seemed to reign among all, with the exception, perhaps, of Kendall. I saw from his appearance that he had slept none during the night. There was an air of *hopeful resignation*—if such an appearance be possible,

and he was evidently downcast at not receiving some expected information. As we mounted our horses and rode away, he said—

“Our destination now is the Saskatchewan.”

CHAPTER III.

MY FRIEND'S STORY.

The buffaloes and the buffalo hunt, the grizzly bears, the vast rolling prairie, the mighty forests and mountains, the beautiful lakes and streams and enchanting landscapes of the Far West—all these have been described again and again by travelers, until they have lost, in a great measure, their interest. I shall not therefore dwell upon the particulars of our journey through Nebraska Territory to British America. It was certainly a long route across this mighty territory, whose area far exceeds that of all the Western and Middle States combined. It was a long route, I say, and it required weeks for us to accomplish it. Never before did I gain any adequate idea of the vast resources of our Republic, till I made this expedition. I could not have believed it possible to travel day after day and week after week without meeting a white man. And yet we did it. From the time of leaving Fort Laramie until we had reached the forty-eighth parallel of latitude, we encountered no “pale-faces,” and not more than a dozen Indians. As we ran considerable danger in the latter case, we were very careful to avoid them. More than once we saw the smoke of their camp fires, and made a detour of miles to pass them, and I remember that, on reaching the Yellowstone, we caught sight of a large war party of Crows going toward the Blackfeet country, and were in a considerable trepidation lest we had discovered ourselves to them; but as they evidently had no fears of an enemy in the rear, we escaped observation. We waited on the Yellowstone several days, in the hope of seeing the steamer which annually

ascends it, but were disappointed, as we were probably some weeks too late.

We consumed nearly a week in getting through the Big Horn Mountains, and the network of rivers and canons, that issue from their eastern slope, and two weeks more, before crossing the Missouri a short distance below the Great Falls. On the way thither, we shot many a buffalo and antelope, and had a drawn battle with a grizzly bear, which finally escaped us after we had lodged four balls in his body. While in the Black Hills we were overtaken by a most furious storm of rain, sleet and snow, and this too in mid summer. We kept a fire burning, but for all this, I once verily believed we were doomed to perish from cold. Our animals shivered like aspen leaves, under cover of their blankets. We were glad enough to get out of this icy region into the more sunshiny temperature of the plains.

From the Missouri River we took a northwest direction toward the source of the South Branch of the Saskatchewan, which takes its rise in the Rocky Mountains, at a point some distance north of the boundary line of our territory. This would lead us directly through the Blackfoot country, and Kendall expressed his belief that we could not expect to escape an affray with those blood thirsty savages, as they were constantly roaming in every direction, and waging a war of extermination against the hunters and trappers that penetrated this region. I made the proposal to "go around" them. Kendall replied that it was impossible. They scoured over the Far West for hundreds of miles on each side of the Rocky Mountains, and were as likely to be encountered in one place as in another. In fact, we were already upon their hunting grounds, and might meet them at any moment. Accordingly we kept on resolutely toward the Northwest.

One night we encamped in a small valley-like depression, on the eastern bank of the Marias River, itself a tributary of the Missouri. There was no moon, and the night was of pitchy darkness. Since leaving the river last named, we had failed to see any signs of the Blackfeet,

and had indulged in some hope that their warriors were absent upon an expedition of some kind or other. Our situation was such that there was scarcely a possibility of our fire being seen; and as the night was chilly, we allowed it to burn. Our horses were picketed within a few paces of us. Our supper had been swallowed, and all was ready for slumber. We sat smoking by the fire, moody and silent for a long time.

Finally Kendall spoke:

"Marewold, I suppose you have thought me silent and reserved."

I knew what was coming, and made no reply, but smoked the harder. He waited a moment, as if he expected an answer, and receiving none looked up in surprise.

"You recollect that upon the first night of our meeting, I promised to give you the cause of my wandering for so long a time over the West!

"Do you wish to hear it?"

"Do as you please about it. Remember I haven't asked you, and if you have any fears or unwillingness, please don't impart it."

"After I had talked a half hour with you, I felt willing to trust my secret to your keeping; but I thought there was no need of it, unless I was to have you as a companion. I saw you were impulsive and enthusiastic, and would not have been surprised, had you changed your mind at Fort Laramie, and gone on westward to California, instead of continuing with me. But now we have been so long together, and have come so far that there is little fear of our separating just at present. And now you shall have my story.

"It is a long story, but I shall give it all to you. Just throw a few sticks upon the fire, for I do not wish to cease my narration until I have finished."

I did as requested, and Kendall spoke as follows:

"I am an only son; my parents are very wealthy, and although now absent from the city, their home is in New Orleans. It is there they have resided for the last thirty years, and it is there both I and my sister were born. She

is ten years younger than myself, and the name which she bears is Enola, the same as my mother's. We two were the only children my parents ever had, and as Enola was a baby when I was a boy, you may well suppose she was petted and idolized by both. She was a beautiful girl, and as amiable as beautiful, and the love that I bore for her would have made me lay down my very life at any moment to save her. Hours and hours I have spent playing with her, and my greatest ambition was that she should grow up a beautiful, accomplished, and a good woman. Although father and mother so loved her, they possessed too much good sense to spoil her by imprudent kindness and indulgence. When she arrived at the proper age, she was sent to school, and I went to a Northern college. I corresponded every week with my parents and with Enola; she made me the confidant of all her childish joys and sorrows, her whims and wishes. I returned home twice a year, and those seasons, when we were together, with our parents smiling upon us, were seasons of perfect happiness. My several months' absence were just long enough for me to note the changes in her upon my return. I saw with a proud heart that she was becoming more beautiful every day, and that her attainments were unequalled by any of her age. In addition to this, I noted that she was not only amiable and accomplished, but that, as I had prayed, she was becoming good. She inherited the religious temperament of my mother, and at the age of eleven years she was a communicant at the church. And I, a man of years, who had counted upon the pleasure of instructing her in holy things, have sat with her upon my knee, and from her childish lips received lessons that have made me a stronger and better man. God bless you, Enola! If not on earth, you are an angel in Heaven!

"Thus affairs remained," resumed Kenall, after a pause, "for a year longer. I graduated at college, had received high honors, and was making my preparations to return home to my joyous sister and parents, when a letter from my father reached me, urging me to come at once, as I was needed. It said no more, and in a fever of

apprehension, I started immediately. At the depot another note was handed me. This was from my mother, and I saw, as I opened it, that it was stained with her tears. It imparted what father had not the courage to write. Enola had been missing for a week, and no one could obtain the least information regarding her. I hurried home as fast as express lines and travel night and day could carry me. Arriving there, I found that Enola's disappearance was known throughout the city, and that my father had neglected no means looking toward her recovery. The most skillful detectives were at work, advertisements were inserted in all the papers, not only in those of the city, but in every place of note through the South. At first a reward of a thousand dollars was offered for any one who would give any information regarding her. Shortly after this was increased to five thousand dollars; and on the day of my arrival, at my suggestion, it was put up to ten thousand—this, too, remember, for information and not for her recovery. In the presence of a company of detective police officers, I heard my father make an agreement to give to the one who recovered her, fifteen thousand dollars, and to every one of the others, a thousand. From these lavish offers, which every one knew would be fulfilled to the letter, you may gain some idea of the efforts which were made in behalf of Enola. But great as were these efforts and skillful as were the detectives, not a clue was obtained through them. All that the officers could learn was, what every one already knew, Enola had left her school at the usual hour in the afternoon. She had been seen on the street by several children, after which she had disappeared. There must have been stratagem employed, for if violence had been used some one would have certainly noticed it in such a city as New Orleans.

“I doubt whether we ever should have learned anything more had it not been given voluntarily to us. About a week after my arrival, a letter post-marked Cincinnati, Ohio, came to my father, in which the writer stated that Enola had been carried off by a band of gipsies. The letter contained nothing more, and was anonymous. It

was shown to the detectives, and at their suggestion an advertisement was inserted in the Cincinnati papers, calling on the person who had sent the note, to come forward and claim the reward. At the same time the officers made preparations to capture him in case he did so. The man was too cunning, however, to be thus caught, and their hopes in this direction were frustrated.

“But a new turn was given to their efforts. At every port in the United States from which emigrants departed to the Old World, an officer was stationed, whose duty it was to examine the face of every gipsy who went on board. So expeditiously were these precautions taken that it was rendered morally impossible for her to leave the country.

“Thus a year went on, during which time not a word more was gained regarding her. The belief then obtained among the detectives, that in case these gipsies had carried her off, they had crossed the Mississippi, and gone West. To have followed them here would have been as useless, in their opinion, as to search the Pacific in an open boat for her; and in spite of the great rewards offered, not a man could be found who was willing to make the attempt. This, you must recollect, was before Fremont had explored the Far West, and it was as a sealed book to us. At this time another note reached my father, from the same person who had sent the former. It stated that Enola had been captured by a band of gipsies, as he had said before, and that this band had ascended the Mississippi to St. Louis, where they had gone westward upon the prairies. It contained nothing more, and was also without signature..

“A detective visited Cincinnati, and spent several months in searching out the writer of this note; every trap that his ingenuity could invent, was employed to decoy him, but it was of no avail, and my father was finally told that it was a useless expenditure of means to search further. It was then I formed the resolution which for eight years I have been carrying out. Had we been certain that Enola was dead, our grief would have been softened into resignation in time; but to know she was living, a prisoner among a race of vagabonds, was

more than either of us could bear, and I made the vow to search for her until I had recovered her or ascertained her fate. When I acquainted my parents with my determination, they did not oppose it, for they saw I could not be changed, and they never could have rested under the knowledge that Enola was suffering such a fate. My father advised me before going to send several experienced hunters upon the hunt, and to engage one for my own companion. I paid two trappers a thousand dollars to spend a year in searching in the Northwest, and two more the same amount, to search what was then Mexican territory, but what is now a portion of California; while, accompanied by another, I went to the Rocky Mountains, but did not cross them. The wealth of the Indies would not have tempted my companion to the effort, and as I knew that Enola never could have made the passage, I did not urge him.

“To shorten my story. Upon the return of all these, it was found that not one of them had gained a shadow of information. Instead of despairing, I was the more determined. I knew that the love of gain could tempt no one to the efforts and sacrifices that my affection for my lost sister would bring from me. It would require hours for me to give an account of my wanderings; and when I have the leisure I may give you some adventures which befell me.

“I was absent at this time a year more, and extended my wanderings to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Here I met a man known as “Old Bill Williams,”* who told me that a year before he had seen a band of gipsies on the head waters of the Platte. I immediately set out for that region, reached it, and failed to gain any trace whatever of them. I wandered over the prairie until autumn, when I went home.

“When I started again, Fremont had just published the report of his first two expeditions. These reports were of

* This man was the guide employed by Fremont in his memorable Fourth Expedition, and to whose ignorance and incapacity the disaster of that undertaking are to be attributed.

great use to me, as I traveled over a vast deal of the territory which he describes. At Burt's Fort I hired a half breed to accompany me, and this time we crossed the Rocky Mountains, and I saw the waters of the Pacific. My companion knew every pass in the mountains, and the passage was made with a great deal less difficulty than I anticipated. I remained in Oregon until we heard that gold had been discovered in California, and until that tide of emigration from every part of the world to the region commenced. Of hundreds of these, encountered on the way, I made inquiries, but learned nothing until I reached the head waters of the Platte, when I again learned that a band of gipsies had camped in that region a number of years before. But the discouraging part of the matter was, that it was impossible to learn in what direction they had gone.

"I had been absent from home so long that I returned there, nearly disheartened by this time. On the way thither I naturally meditated upon my lost sister, and fell to wondering as to the cause of my repeated failures in obtaining information of her. I felt certain that the words of the two letters to which I have referred were true, and that the gipsies were somewhere west of the Mississippi. Such being the case, and they being as migratory as the Arabs, it was incomprehensible to me that I should have failed to gain more definite tidings regarding them. All at once the thought struck me that they had gone so far north as to enter the British possessions, and that they must be located there or somewhere in the mighty extent of this Nebraska Territory: and before reaching home I made the resolve to make a journey of search in this direction, which, successful or otherwise, should be my last one.

"I remained home until this last spring. I had, of course, imparted my plan to my parents, and they agreed that it was best to do as I had proposed. Should I return to them without our dear Enola, they would give her up as lost forever to them in this world, and I felt that I should do the same.

"And now my dear friend," said Kendall, his eyes glowing with excitement, "comes the most singular part

of the story. All this time I had entertained the impression that these gipsies were somewhere on the Saskatchewan, without being able to give any reason for such a belief. I remember how continually I was repeating over the name of that river to myself, and how I learned all that I could about it upon my return home. Well, sir, on the very day that I had prepared to start, came a third letter from Cincinnati, stating that the band which held Enola had been located on the southern branch of the Saskatchewan for over five years! My parents now believed that their long-lost daughter was to be restored to them. After consulting together, it was agreed that after finding her (for they said they knew I would), I should employ several men to accompany me to California, where they would meet me. They were to take passage in the steamer, and I suppose by this time, if no accident has befallen them, they are awaiting my arrival in San Francisco."

I had remained almost spell-bound during the recital of the foregoing by Kendall, and when he ceased speaking, and looked toward me, as if he expected me to speak, I was at a loss what to say.

"Well, what do you think of my story?" he asked in a cheerful voice.

"It is the most remarkable I ever heard," I replied. "It is another confirmation of the proverb that truth is stranger than fiction. I knew some powerful motive led you to lead this wandering life, but I little dreamed its true nature. Kendall, you are a noble fellow. Heaven I know, will reward your efforts."

"I feel as if I were about to be rewarded," he answered.

"There are several points in your narration," I continued, "which struck me forcibly at the time, but of which I said nothing, as I did not wish to interrupt you. In the first place, have you never formed a suspicion as to the cause of your sister's abduction, and as to who did it?"

"I have often thought upon that, but have never spoken to any one regarding it. This is the only conclu-

sion to which I can arrive. When my mother was a young woman, I have been told she had many suitors. When she married my father, she must have disappointed many of these. Some one, to revenge himself, has hired these gipsies to carry off their child, paying them enough to prevent the rewards offered enticing them to deliver her up."

"Have you no suspicion who this person could be?"

"Not in the least; and I am sure that neither my father nor mother has. I say, I have no suspicions, but I have sometimes thought he might be the writer of those anonymous letters."

"Hardly probable, as he would incur too much risk in doing so. It may be some party to the affair, who, feeling pity for the grief of your parents and yourself, has done as much as he dare to assist you in recovering your sister."

"My impression that she was on the Saskatchewan, was certainly singular—was it not?"

"It was, indeed; and can only be a good omen."

"We shall reach the South Branch in a day or two, I think, when my anxiety shall be ended. How my heart throbs at the thought!"

"Can you bear a disappointment again?"

"I can bear anything; but I pray God this cup may pass from me. As I have said several times, this is the last search I shall make. I have been engaged to be married for several years, and it has been deferred from time to time, on account of this matter."

"Kendall," said I, taking his hand, "I wish to raise no false hopes in your breast, but something tells me that your sister shall dance at your wedding."

"And you shall, too," he added, with sparkling eyes. It was far in the night, and we said no more.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SHADOW OF THE TRAIL.

We were now in extreme Northern Nebraska, within a few miles of British America. It was early in August, the warmest portion of the year; but this climate in which we found ourselves was rarefied and bracing as that of early winter in the Middle States. In the depth of the cold season the temperature of Nebraska has been known to descend to forty degrees below zero; and I have often heard the clerks in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company tell of firing *mercury bullets* from their guns. Knowing this, we were anxious to be in a more southern latitude ere the polar winter commenced.

The next morning, after Kendall had related the story given in the preceding chapter, we struck off in a direction due north, over a level prairie country, interspersed with timber and undergrowth, and crossed by numerous streams of clear, running water, of icy coldness. The passage of these was the most disagreeable portion of our journey. Generally our horses were able to ford them without wetting ourselves: but more than once through the day we received a chilly bath that made our teeth chatter for a long time afterward. As we were on the eastern slope of the great Rocky Chain, the waters of all the streams we encountered flowed in an easterly and southern direction. To our joy, the frequency of these diminished, until, by the middle of the afternoon, we congratulated ourselves upon our exemption from fording them.

The face of the country now underwent a material change; it became more hilly and broken, rent in several places by deep, yawning chasms, and from the perceptible change in the temperature, we concluded we were at a great elevation above the sea.

We had descended a sort of hill, which afforded a wide view of the surrounding country, and Kendall was talking

and pointing out the route he intended to follow, when he uttered the exclamation—

“Yonder is the Blackfoot camp.”

Following the direction of his finger, I saw a mass of smoke lazily ascending through the tops of a number of dwarf cedars, and in the light, rarefied atmosphere, settling in a cloud, which appeared to be borne upward by the tree-tops.

“What do you think of that prospect? Just follow me further in these bushes, where we stand less chance of being seen. What do you think of it, Marewold!”

“It reminds me of my first meeting with you. They may be friends, who have penetrated thus far.”

“I wish it were so, but they are not. This is too dangerous territory for them, and the very fact of that camp fire being visible for miles proves that they are red men.”

“Have we anything to fear from them?”

“If you refer to the disposition of the Blackfeet, I can answer that they are the inveterate enemies of the white race, and have been ever since the two set foot on the same soil, and they probably will be, as long as a dozen warriors of them are left. The worst of it is, they are in the very route I had laid out to follow.”

“We can go around them, as we have done before.”

“I suppose there is no other course left—hello! what’s up now?”

A dozen Blackfeet made their appearance, straggling along, apparently without aim or object, but taking a general direction toward us.

“Are they a war party?” I asked, turning toward Kendall.

“No, they are only a few who have been out fishing or hunting. There are more in the grove, whom it will not take long to be a war-party, if we are seen.”

We started our horses, diverging to the right, so as to give the Indians a wide berth. We had not gone a great distance, when Kendall rode forward and ventured to say.

“They have taken an observation,” said he, “which proves that we have not been seen. It will soon be dark,

and I propose that we encamp in that clump of trees to the right, a good half mile from here, and more than that from the Blackfoot camp."

We set out at once for the camp indicated, picking our way with great caution, for we both felt that the least imprudence would be fatal. We had gone hardly half the distance, when we encountered a broad creek, which we were obliged to cross. The water was not deep, and it flowed very rapidly over a stony bottom, foaming, dashing and eddying along over the rocks and around the turas in the channel, with such an uproar that, when we stood upon its banks, we could hardly hear each other's voices.

To our unbounded dismay, as we thus sat talking, we saw a huge Blackfoot warrior emerge from the cover of the opposite shore, and step into the water, as if about to cross. He did not observe us, as his head was bent, and I observed at once that he had no weapon except his hunting-knife in his belt. The instant he made his appearance, Kendall raised his rifle, and pointing it full at his breast, kept it in that direction without firing. The savage stepped carefully from stone to stone, and when about half way across, raised his head. I could not forbear a smile at the expression of amazement and terror that was depicted upon his dusky countenance. He stood as motionless as a statue for a few seconds, and then, with his black orbs full upon Kendall, he took a backward step.

"Halt!" commanded my friend, as he raised his other foot.

The Indian, from Kendall's action, understood that he had been summoned to surrender, and seeing there was no chance of escape, he dropped both arms by his side in token of submission. My friend then lowered his rifle, and we both rode into the creek, separating so that one of us was on either side of him. At a sign from my companion he turned, and we all three ascended the opposite bank at the same moment. Here we halted, and Kendall undertook to converse with him, but found that it was impossible, as the Blackfoot did not, or pretended not, to understand the English tongue. Seeing this, Kendall offered

him several pieces of tobacco, gave him a fine pocket-knife, and then signed to him that he was at liberty to depart. The astonished savage, from his manner, evidently considered us insane. He hesitated a moment, mumbled something which neither of us understood, and then quickly disappeared in the direction of the Indian encampment.

"Nothing would have been easier than to have put him out of the way," said Kendall, by way of explanation; "and, perhaps, I have run some risk in not doing it; but I would rather it should be thus than imbrue my hands in his blood."

"Why not have kept him a prisoner?"

"That would have been impossible, and could have done no good. I rely solely upon the impression which my kindness made upon him. I don't believe he will harm us, or set any one upon our trail. I tell you, Warren Marewold, I have never yet met the man, white or red, who forgets a kindness to him."

"Is it not probable that he suspects that your kindness was feigned, in order to gain the good will of his tribe?"

"I think not, as he must have seen I could have killed him with the greatest ease. However, it shall not delude us into any carelessness. So long as we are in this territory, so long both will not close our eyes at the same time."

A few minutes later we reached the grove to which I have referred, where we at once commenced preparations for the night. In the first place, Kendall made a thorough reconnaissance of our situation, passing around the outside, gaining as good an idea of the surrounding country as the gathering darkness would permit. Upon his return, he reported "All right," and we at once picketed our horses.

The kindling of a fire was out of the question, and as the grove grew darker and darker, we wrapped our blankets around us, and sat closer together. We scarcely conversed in whispers even, so silent and listening were we. After a while, at my request, Kendall agreed to lay down for the night, while I stood guard. "Standing guard" on

a chilly night, without the liberty of changing your situation often enough to keep the benumbed blood in circulation, is disagreeable enough; and when in addition to this, your apprehension makes every bush a lurking enemy, and every falling leaf the stealthy footstep of a foe, it becomes a duty which no one need envy. Never did a night seem longer, and never did a poor shipwrecked mariner greet the dawn more gladly than did I.

CHAPTER V.

THE END OF THE TRIAL.

The next day we encountered a solitary hunter, who was as much astonished as ourselves. He was rather reticent and was disposed to get away from us, as soon as he exchanged greetings. Before we bade him farewell, he communicated the startling information that he had seen a band of gipsies some weeks before, upon the Saskatchewan. Kendall proposed that we should travel all night, and I gladly consented, as it bid fair to be moon-lit and pleasant.

It was not until the morning had fairly broke, that we again picketed our horses, and had several hours' rest. This was taken solely on account of our animals, as neither of us had the least desire for sleep. I could but notice a feverish restlessness and anxiety about Kendall, caused, I suppose, by the consciousness that either a bitter disappointment or a most happy anticipation was soon to be realized. While our horses were cropping the rich, juicy grass, we took a survey of the surrounding country, and Kendall remarked that it was probable we were in British territory. Of course there could be no positive certainty of this until we saw the Saskatchewan; but, as we seemed to have left the Blackfeet behind, even in the short distance passed, since seeing them, it was probable we were in the provinces of the Hudson's Bay Company, where

there was nothing in fact to fear from the savages as the latter, in a great measure, were dependent upon the former for their subsistence and support.

All through the day, as for the last week, we pursued a direction parallel to the Rocky Mountains, whose snowy peaks were ever visible on our left. The appearance of this mighty chain, as seen by us, was indescribably grand and sublime. Their base being hid from view by the intervening country, their upper portion resembled a great wall of cumulous clouds piled up against the sky, such as sometimes appear during the winter months. They were of every imaginable shape and combination, and when the wind came from the west, we had a taste of the eternal cold which reigns among them.

When we camped that night, neither of us had any doubt that we had left Nebraska and were within a few miles of the valley of the Saskatchewan. We were certain of reaching it on the morrow, and I asked Kendall the course he intended to pursue.

"You are aware," said he, "that this large river, like scores of others, takes its rise in the Rocky Mountains. Two smaller rivers, known respectively as the North and South Branches, join together much in the same manner as do the tines of a fork; and from their junction to the point where their waters debouch into the Hudson Bay, they are known as the Saskatchewan. It is a beautiful river during the summer months, and the scenery on its banks is probably unequalled by any north of our territory. Of course we shall strike the South Branch first, at a point near its canon, if it has any. We will follow it down, until we reach the other branch; and, if we have discovered nothing of these gipsies, we will then separate—one ascending the northern fork, and the other going down the main river, until they are discovered."

"Is there no particular locality where you expect to find them?"

"You recollect that the note to which I have referred, stated that they were upon the southern branch. This may have been a mistake, but I incline to the belief that it

is correct. Of course our first search will be along this stream."

"In case of discovering your sister, do you apprehend no difficulty in gaining possession of her?"

"That is a matter upon which I have been reflecting for the last few days, and it is one which, I confess, has troubled me not a little. There is one method to which we can resort, and which, I feel, cannot fail us. It is one, too, which I would use at the beginning, did it not require too much time to bring it into play."

"What is it, Kendall?"

"I will lay the matter before some of the employees of the Hudson Bay Company, who will settle it for us in a very short time. I have met several men who have been connected with that company; and from what I know of it, I am sure that its influential members are honorable men, and will give us every assistance in their power."

"That will be your *last* resort, I understand?"

"Yes; we will try milder measures at first."

We traveled a number of miles further that night, and resumed our journey as soon as our animals had had enough rest. The weather continued clear and bracing, reminding us greatly of the autumn months of our own clime; and the scenery presented all the variety of wood, stream, prairie, and mountain, which had so delighted the eye in the country we had left.

By noon we rode through a heavily wooded country—over hills and through valleys—and finally, our horses panting and exhausted, paused on the summit of a large hill.

"Look yonder!" exclaimed Kendall, with a start of joy.

Following the direction of his finger, I saw, some distance to the northward, the glistening surface of a river, which, after emerging from a mass of timber to the left, wound across the open country, until it made a sweeping bend, and was lost again to view in what seemed a forest of cedars.

"Have you never seen a river before?" I asked, pretending not to understand his emotion.

"I never saw the South Branch of the Saskatchewan before. Hurrah!"

And swinging his hat over his head, he dashed at full gallop down the hill toward the river. I followed at a brisk canter, but I was soon left behind, and it was over an hour before I found him, impatiently awaiting my arrival on its banks.

"I think there is no need of going *up* it," said he. "We will, therefore, go down stream."

This, we soon found, was no easy matter. From the nature of the country, we were obliged, in the course of the afternoon, to leave the river more than once. We managed, however, not to lose sight of it for any length of time; and to assure ourselves that there was no possibility of our having passed the gipsy camp in the course of these deviations. Our progress was necessarily slow, and when night came, Kendall expressed some anxiety as to the length of the search. If the band were located at any distance from the stream, it was more than probable we should fail to discover them, unless by accident. To save time, he stated his determination of repairing to one of the stations of the Hudson Bay Company, and seeking information of the whereabouts of the gipsies, in case we reached the Saskatchewan without seeing them, feeling assured that the presence of such a band must be known to many of their employees.

We encamped upon a flat rock upon the river bank, and the light of the fire shone far out upon the surface of the stream. The air was chilly, but free from that disagreeable dampness which characterizes the damp weather at this season of the year. There was an abundance of game along this river, and I think we were never hungry for an hour, so easily was it procured.

The second day's journey was more difficult than the first, and the entire forenoon was consumed in making a distance of five or six miles. After that, however, we experienced less difficulty, and were hopeful of recovering

the lost time. It was near the middle of the afternoon that, after having made a long detour, we once more reached the shore of the river. I had turned my head toward Kendall, and was just on the point of speaking, when he motioned silence, and pointed to the river. Looking back again, I saw a large Indian canoe, in which were seated four warriors, driving it with great swiftness through the waters. At the very instant I discovered them they discovered us, and their canoe was heeled toward the shore.

"What shall we do?" I asked of Kendall. "Run or fight?"

"There is no need of doing either," he answered. "They are friendly, and are coming ashore to have a talk with us. They evidently take us for Hudson Bay men."

"You do the talking, then, upon our side, for you are better able to manage matters than I am."

A moment later and the prow of the canoe grated lightly upon the sand of the shore. Two Indians at once stepped out and approached us. The others remained in the canoe, and we noticed that those advancing toward us had left their arms with them. They were tall, splendid looking men, and moved with all the dignity of native American warriors. The instant we noticed their peaceful actions, we dismounted, and leaving our guns also behind, stepped forward and met them.

"Good day, brother," said the foremost, in good English, **as he took Kendall's hand.**

"Good day," returned the latter. "I am glad to meet my Indian brother."

"Want beaver skin, otter skin, martin skin, fox skin?" asked the savage, with great eagerness.

"No, I wish no peltries."

"Want what, then?"

"We want the Hudson Bay men. Where are they?"

"Way off yonder—good way off—at fort," returned the Indian, making a gesture down stream. "Take two—tree—good many hours to reach 'em on hoss. Go quick in canoe."

"I suppose so ; but we have no canoe."

The savage made no reply to this, and evidently failed to see the hint. After a moment's silence, Kendall asked:

"Are there no whites but at the fort ?"

The Indian nodded his head several times, and answered:

"Yes, good many."

"And where are they now ?"

"All over—in woods and rivers there—there—there—there," he replied, pointing successively to the four points of the compass.

"Are there any on the banks of the stream ?"

"Some—not many."

"Are they Hudson Bay men ?"

"No ; live in cabins—hunt good deal—not Hudson Bay men."

"How far off are they ?"

"Two, tree, twenty miles—see 'em to-morrow. Injin must go now."

We presented them with some tobacco, and again shaking hands with them, saw them step in the canoe and paddle off.

"We are on the trail most certainly," said Kendall. "Providence seems to favor us, and I feel more hopeful this minute than I have in years. To-morrow we surely shall see the camp."

I joined him in his ardent expectations, and our journey was characterized by a haste and recklessness that, in a hostile country, would have sealed our fate. We did not draw rein until the darkness compelled us, and the instant the round face of the moon rose above the forest, Kendall aroused me, and we were *en route* again, with greater precipitancy than before.

Journeying at midnight on the banks of that lone river, in that far-off country, with no eye but that of Heaven looking upon us, with no ear but that of the startled animal to hear the step of our plunging horses, and with no sound but that of the calmly flowing river beside us, we each felt the influence of the scene, and our lips were silent. I often looked at Kendall, and I remember how

handsome and noble he appeared as the moonlight lit up his features. I revered him as I reflected upon the devotion with which he regarded his lost sister, and the extraordinary faith that had led him to devote so many years of his life to her rescue.

Thus, each wrapped in reverie, the miles passed unheeded by, and we traveled mechanically, hour after hour. How long it would have been thus, I cannot tell, had not our meditations been most summarily interrupted by an occurrence as exciting as it was unexpected.

Our horses were walking side by side—so closely that my foot touched that of Kendall. The bank of the stream at this point was almost entirely free from timber, as it probably was for several miles back. We had reached a sort of valley, and were just on the point of descending it, when both of our animals recoiled with a snort of alarm. This aroused me as effectually as a shock of electricity would have done, and I looked hurriedly about for the cause of our horses' terror. The valley appeared full of trees and shrubbery, and was so shrouded in gloom that the darkness itself was only visible. We urged our animals to advance, but after they had gone a step or two, they recoiled again, and nothing would induce them to move any further forward.

"Something or somebody is down in that valley," said Kendall, "or our horses would not behave in this manner."

"It seems to me," said I, turning the head of my beast, "that we are repeating the absurdity of which the trappers accused us, that of standing out in full view on the top of a hill, when an enemy is in sight."

We had retired so far, however, that we now felt secure from observation.

"It is nothing more than some wild animal, I think," said Kendall. "Probably a bear, as their sudden appearance often creates a terror in any animal, especially the horse."

"Let us dismount and find out; it will take us but a few minutes."

"Let me do that alone, Marewold. Should they make

a rush this way we might lose our beasts. You stay and guard them, and I will be back in a short time."

With this, he dropped lightly to the ground, and moved stealthily away in the darkness. He was gone twenty minutes or more, during which I heard not a single sound, save that of the soft wash of the river. I listened intently, and was still listening, when he suddenly re-appeared beside his horse.

"Marewold," said he, in a tremulous voice, "what do you suppose I found down in that valley?"

"I am sure I cannot tell."

"I have found that band of gipsies!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE GIPSIES.

For a moment neither of us spoke. I saw that Kendall was agitated, and was trying to overcome it. At length he said—

"Marewold, it cannot be far from daylight."

As he spoke, I noticed the grayish light of the dawning morning already appearing in the east, and replied that the day was upon us.

"Let us move away where there is no danger of being seen. This discovery is unexpected, and I must prepare myself for it."

We went fully a quarter of a mile without speaking. We then halted, and Kendall's first action was to sink upon his knees, and spend several minutes in prayer.

"Marewold, my dear friend," said he, "the action from this point devolves upon you. I dare not trust myself within that camp. I could neither bear the pain of disappointment nor the joy of discovering her. I shall upset all my plans entirely. Will you assist me?"

"Assist you? Only command me, Kendall, and I will do anything in my power. I am not only willing, but am

anxious to take upon me the responsibility of carrying the matter through from that point."

"There must be no haste, then, although my impatience seems intolerable. Let us select a spot with the intention of remaining several days in it. We will, then, make our arrangements and commence operations."

An hour or so was spent in further search, and finally we struck upon a sort of natural cave, several hundred yards from the river. Here we placed our saddles, bridles and equipments, and confined the horses by means of lariats, where they could crop all the grass they needed, and at the same time be under the eyes of whichever of us remained at home. By this time it was broad daylight. Kendall proposed breakfast before starting, but as my anxiety and impatience were hardly less than his, I had no appetite, and so informed him."

"Be careful, dear Marwold," said he, as I was about to start; "let the entire object of this venture upon your part be to find whether Enola is among them. You know how cautious it is necessary to be. Should you awaken suspicion as to the true cause of your visit, you may defeat everything. Return as you see fit, and God be with us both!"

I did not look in his face, but I felt his hand tremble as it convulsively closed upon mine, and I moved away in the direction of the gipsy encampment. I determined to defeat nothing by haste or precipitation; and farther to accomplish the object in hand, I resolved that my coming upon the band should seem to them as if it were purely accidental upon my part. Accordingly, as I approached the hill where our horses had first taken fright, I sauntered carelessly along, looking to my right and left as though upon a mere morning hunt. When I reached the brow of this hill, and felt that I was in full sight of the camp, instead of looking toward it, I kept my gaze fixed toward a tree on my left hand, as though my whole attention was absorbed by something in its branches. Keeping my head in this direction, I went half way down the hill, then looked

before me, and abruptly paused with a start of astonishment.

I am sorry to say, however, that the effect of this fine piece of acting was entirely lost upon my audience, for, from appearance, every one of them was sound asleep. Down in the valley before me were five specimens of human habitations, each of which seemed a compromise between, or rather combination of a cabin, hut, lodge and tent. They were ragged and patched, and made of barks, logs, trees, brush, stone, and everything, in fact, which could be turned to any account. Each was of a quadrilateral shape, about thirty-five feet square, and the five stood in a semicircle which was faced by myself. In spite of their dilapidated appearance, they were firm and fully able to withstand the fiercest storms that ever raged in this region. There were sticks, the bones of animals, and portions of clothing scattered about, so that, take it all in all, a more slovenly and repulsive "settlement" could not possibly be imagined.

As I stood gazing at these with genuine astonishment, smoke commenced issuing from an opening in the corner of one of the roofs of one of the edifices. By this I judged the village would soon be astir, and while debating upon the best means of making myself observed, a door opened, and a bare-headed man, rubbing his eyes, and gaping as though just awaking, stepped forth. He walked directly toward me, and continued gouging his eyes until within ten feet, when he paused, opened them and his mouth, and stared directly at me.

"Good morning, my friend," said I, pleasantly.

He stared a moment more, and then, without speaking or acknowledging my salutation in any manner, moved on by me up the hill. He returned in a short time, carrying a bundle of brush in his arms. I saluted him again as he passed me, but with no better success than before, and he soon disappeared in his hut.

The moment he was invisible I turned my back upon him and walked away, deeming it best to wait until all his friends were up and doing, before I ventured among

them. I passed down to the river bank, and seating myself, I meditated upon the best course for me to pursue. As this had already been decided, I soon fell to thinking of another matter.

During the last two or three chapters I have thought it was time to make a confession. Having failed to do it, I will now make atonement. The story which Kendall related, it is hardly necessary to say, was of absorbing interest to me. The enthusiastic picture which he gave of his sister, her beauty and goodness, had been constantly before me ever since, and although my feelings must have been far different from his, I doubt whether he was more anxious to look upon the lost Enola than I was. I had formed my ideal of her, and felt that she must be a being whom every one would reverence. Even in the repulsive surroundings in which she had been placed so long, the lustre of her pure character could not have been dimmed. I had long reached the first step in the great passion of our nature—that of *interest* in its recipient. Beyond that I could not go until I had seen her face to face, and conversed with her.

I had not spoken of this feeling to Kendall, and I am convinced he had no suspicions of it, and I further resolved that he should have none until the proper moment. Often in riding beside him upon the prairie, or when listlessly reclining by the camp fire, I had indulged in the most extravagant dreams of the ideal Enola. The future wore none but roseate hues to me, and my enthusiasm was such that it seemed I could spend a lifetime in searching for her. Such reveries as these were so pleasant that I could lose myself in them at any time; and when I arose from my seat, I saw from the sun that I had been indulging my fanciful imagination for over an hour.

I strolled off toward the hill, and as soon as I gained a view of the huts, I saw the gipsies were all astir. Over a score of children were running about, playing, fighting, and screaming, ragged and dirty, while the older portion of the males were cutting wood, smoking and lounging listlessly around their cabins. Just as I came up, I saw

several young men with rifles, and carrying game, approach from an opposite direction, so that I judged they had been upon a hunting excursion. By this means, and that of trapping during the cold season, they could gain a comfortable livelihood. They were in a good fur country, and could not starve so long as they were not too lazy to exert themselves.

I had nearly descended the hill, when several of the young ones caught sight of me, and with a series of yells the whole troop started toward me. In an instant I was surrounded, and pulled and pinched, until I was barely able to keep on my feet. I took it all in good part however, and played with the children till they screamed with delight. All this time I was on the lookout for their dogs, but was much relieved to find, singularly enough, that there was not one in the village. A shout from a huge man who was seated on a log, smoking, scattered all the children, and gave me the opportunity I wished.

"A beautiful morning," said I, nodding toward this personage.

He looked up at me, with his teeth shut down so tightly upon the stem of his black pipe, that it seemed it must be crushed; and, although he uttered nothing, his expression said as plainly as words can speak:

"Well, what of it?"

Pretending not to notice his expressive silence, I stepped carelessly forward and seated myself on the log beside him. The instant I did so he rose up, brushed the rear portion of his pants, turned his besy head toward me, and asked:

"What do you want?"

"I have been wandering around the country, and stumbled upon your place here, so I thought I would just come over and take a look at you."

"What do you want?"

"Your people are gipsies, are they not?"

"S'pose so—what of it?"

"Shall I read the future to you?" asked a woman—

not an old, bent and withered crone, but a young and handsome one."

I laughed, arose, and offered her my hand, careful that, at the same time, it should contain a piece of money; and as she took and examined it, I looked down and scrutinized her face. She had regular features, with light brown hair, and would have been called beautiful, were she in any station in life.

She held my hand a moment, and then, without raising her head, said:

"You come from a long distance."

This piece of information did not excite much amazement in me, as any one would have known it could not well have been otherwise.

"You have seen a great deal of trouble," said she, scanning more closely the lineaments of my hand.

This last remark was a positive untruth, for, as yet, I had seen little; indeed, of the dark side of life.

"But the future is full of hope," said she, "and there is joy awaiting you."

"In what shape will it come?"

"In many; you will be rich; and a friend, long lost, is about to be restored to you."

This last remark, I confess, startled me. It flashed through my brain, as quick as lightning, that she suspected the object of my visit, and favored it, or would do so, if well paid for it. It must either be thus, or else it was simply one of those accidental hits at the very truth, for which we are searching, which persons in her situation sometimes make.

"When is he to be restored to me again?" I asked, as unconcerned as I could.

"She looked up in my face, and with an arch look, said in a soft voice—

"It is not *he*, it is *she*."

"Is it possible?" I laughed. "I was not aware I had ever lost a friend. And pray, when is *she* to be found again?"

"Before the leaves of the trees fall in autumn."

"Quite soon, indeed, for I believe the autumn comes very early in this latitude."

"What brought you here?" she asked, looking at me calmly in the eyes.

"We—that is, I came upon your village in the first place purely by chance."

"You say *we*—there are others with you then?"

"Yes, I have a companion."

"You do not belong to the Hudson Bay Company?"

"No, we are not trappers, we are only on a hunt."

"Are you long since from the States?"

"Not long, but my companion has wandered over the Far West for a number of years."

"What object has brought you two in this section?"

"I have just told you we are on a *hunting* expedition, and we came upon your people here by accident."

"Very well, I am satisfied. Do you remain near here?"

Instantly I thought of the trapper Joe's story, and replied—

"You cannot expect two mere hunters to make an encampment of more than several days' duration."

"You cannot answer *that* question, then? Well, I'm not particular," and she dropped my hand, stepped back, and looked me in the face. I gave a slight start, as though the idea had just entered my head, and said—

"I have replied to your questions, and now I suppose you will allow me to ask some of you?"

She nodded assent, because she could not well refuse, and I proceeded.

"In the first place, you must admit that I have good reason to be surprised at finding a band of gipsies in this remote country. I know your people are wanderers upon the face of the earth, but there are certainly some portions which it cannot be expected they will reach for a few hundred years yet, and this is one of them. Some extraordinary motive must have led your band to brave the perils of the wilderness, and travel this great distance. What is that motive?"

"I can hardly answer that," replied my fair friend,

with one of her arch and incomprehensible looks. Then she added, as though she thought she had committed herself. "None of our race being here, is it not natural that we should think it just the place for us? It is true we are alone, and we are glad of it."

"I cannot understand why that should be so. In such an extensive country as this, a million gipsies could live without elbowing each other. Why then should you and band wish to be alone?"

"Either you or some of your people will learn before many years why not only we, but others, wish to be alone on the Saskatchewan."

I did learn by accident, a few days after, the cause of their remaining on this river, but I never suspected it while talking with her.

"Do you call the States your home?" I asked in a careless manner.

"Our home?" she asked, in genuine amazement. "This is our home, and has been such for years."

"I mean you came from the States originally. You are Americans, not foreigners?"

"Some of us are natives of this country, and some are not. *I am an American.*"

"I notice you speak like a person who has an education. Have you always been a gipsy?"

"Ever since I can remember."

"You must have some one with you who is capable of teaching the rest?"

The penetrating look she darted upon me told all. I needed nothing more. But I regretted my words the instant I uttered them. They awakened a suspicion in her, and in spite of my carelessness it was impossible to rid her of it. She at once became reserved, and manifested a reluctance to continue the conversation. Deeming it best to retain her good will, I placed another piece of money in her hand, and said, in a laughing manner.

"I must go now. Probably my friend and myself may remain in this neighborhood a short time, and I may drop

down here again. You will let me see you, will you not?"

"Perhaps so, perhaps not," she answered, abruptly, turning and walking away.

Several things about this gipsy encampment attracted my attention and excited my curiosity. I saw that, while conversing with my fair fortune-teller, every one else, even to the children, kept aloof from us. But, in the casual glances I cast around, I observed more than one pair of dark, glowing eyes lowering at me, and I knew I was constantly undergoing a strict scrutiny.

Toward the latter part of our conversation I glanced, by the merest accident, over the head of my friend into the bushes beyond. As I did so, I saw three men emerge into the clearing and walk toward us. They had gone but a short distance when one of them noticed us. I heard him mutter something, and putting their hands behind them, they commenced walking backwards, with their eyes fixed upon me, until they were out of sight. Shortly after, they came in view again, carelessly swinging their arms, as though they were merely lounging about, and, separating, each went to a different lodge. Now and then, I also noticed, men slipped off into the woods, each one going singly; but it was evident they united again after they were beyond my sight. Had there not been this attempt at secrecy and concealment, I should have thought nothing of their movements.

But that for which I constantly sought was a sign of the lost Inoka. I saw none, and I retraced my steps to where Kendall awaited me.

CHAPTER VII

A DISCOVERY.

I found Kendall impatiently awaiting for my return. He was pacing backward and forward, rather uneasy and anxious.

"Have you seen her?" he asked eagerly, as he saw me.

"I have not seen her, but I feel sure she is there."

"Tell me all about it," said he, with the same eagerness; and, seating himself before me, he riveted his gaze upon me, and drank in every word I uttered. When I had finished, he sprang up and said, as the tears streamed down his cheeks:

"Yes, yes, Enola is there! I shall go and take her away this very day. Let them oppose me if they dare. You will fight for me, will you not?"

I saw he was fearfully excited, and waited for him to cool down. He did so in the course of a half-hour, and then we conversed rationally. It was agreed that I should go again to-morrow, acting as cautiously as before, and only seeking to solve the simple question whether Enola Kendall was with them or not. That determined, we would then decide how to act. Having settled this question, I related to Kendall the action of the three men in coming in the clearing, and the manner in which I saw others leave it.

"That reminds me of what I noticed," said he, starting up. "I have seen a dozen of the gipsies go down the river bank, and as many go up. They had no arms of any kind—but they carried something in their hands—something so diminutive that it was impossible for me to make out what it could be."

"That explains why the three men threw their hands behind them and walked backward the instant they saw me. They had something they wished to conceal."

"The question is, what was it? Now I propose that we find out, as we have the entire afternoon to do it in."

"I am willing," said I, rising to my feet. "I have a horror of mysteries, and was in hopes that I could find some means to solve this. We must be careful, for if caught detecting their footsteps, I am afraid it would not be well with us."

First eating our cold dinner, and examining the pickets and lariats that held our horses, we started toward the river, Kendall leading the way. When within a hundred

yards, and stealing cautiously from tree to tree, we caught a glimpse of the very three men to which I have referred. They were walking rapidly, and talking so earnestly that Kendall said there was no danger in following them up, provided there was none behind us to follow us up. Satisfying ourselves that there was no probability of the latter circumstance, we dogged their footsteps for nearly half a mile. All this time we could see that two of them held something in their hands, though what that something was we could neither tell nor conjecture, beyond the fact that it was small and flexible.

We were walking cautiously along, keeping our gaze fixed upon the three men, when they suddenly disappeared from view. They turned neither to the right nor left, nor did they spring behind any object, but we saw them with our own eyes sink down in the earth! Had not we both observed them, we could not have believed it; but such was the truth, and we looked in each other's faces for the solution. Kendall shook his head and smiled meaningly.

"I cannot comprehend it."

"Shall we go on?"

"Let us wait till night, when the moon is up. They will have returned by that time, and we can take a look around here without being discovered. We might get into some trap by being too inquisitive at present, and defeat the object of this expedition."

We remained a short time in the vicinity, and then retraced our steps, without seeing anything more of the gipsies. Near our encampment was a spot which afforded a view of a short space of the river bank, over which we knew these three would have to pass on returning to their village. We kept a close watch of this spot, and just as the sun was setting, were rewarded by observing not only the three, but twice as many more, returning—all of whom, so far as we were able to judge in the short time they passed before us, had the same mysterious object in their hands.

That night the moon did not rise till very late, and we concluded to spend the intervening period in sleep. Ken-

dall possessed that peculiar power of being able to wake at any moment he chose, so that we had no fears of oversleeping. He expressed some apprehension of a visit from the thieving band so near us; but knowing they could do no mischief without our being awaked by our animals, there was no necessity of our keeping watch.

I had slumbered seemingly a long time, when I was aroused by Kendall's gentle touch upon my shoulder. As I arose, the moon, full and clear, was just visible above the tree-tops, and our task it was evident would be performed with as little difficulty as in the broad daylight.

"Do not speak above a whisper," he admonished.

"There is no telling who is on the move beside us."

"Is it midnight yet?"

He looked at his watch, the figures of whose face were plainly visible, and answered—

"It will be one o'clock in a few minutes. Keep close to me."

I did so, and we made our way through the woods and undergrowth, without breaking a twig beneath our feet. When we reached the river bank, we took the same direction that we had during the day—that is, directly upstream. In due time we reached the spot where we had paused at the singular disappearance of the gipsies. Here we halted.

"It was about three hundred yards from here, I think, that they *went down*," said Kendall, measuring the distance with his eye. "I will keep several yards ahead of you, so that if I stumble into a trap, you will have time to retreat."

We walked side by side until we had gone nearly that distance, when, at my friend's request, I fell behind.

"Keep a look-out for me," said he, partly turning his head, "and if you see anything suspicious, speak out."

"I will; but, for Heaven's sake, Kendall, don't be blind. You must look at your own footsteps."

"I will; but you can help me. Hello! the ground looks as though they had been digging in these parts."

"Halt, then, till I come up."

"I am feeling my way, but"——

What else he would have said was lost to me, for he went out of sight as quick as lightning.

"Kendall, where are you? Speak, for God's sake!" I called out.

I thought I detected a faint answer, and moved forward a step or two.

"Kendall, speak, or"——

Down I went, too. So soon as I recovered from the shock, I looked up, and saw that I had fallen about ten feet into what seemed a pit, newly dug. I again called out my friend's name.

"Here I am," he answered with a laugh. **"I thought I was hurt, but I find I was only frightened at my original way of coming down stairs. But where are we? What does this mean?"**

"Perhaps they have been digging graves here."

"If such is the case, we are the only inmates. Let us take a look, and see what there is about here."

The ground being newly dug, and all of a rich, brown color, it was difficult for us to make out the peculiarities of the pit. Beside this, several large trees completely overshadowed it, so that we were enveloped in natural darkness: and in the search which we instituted, we were guided solely by the sense of feeling. All at once my hand struck something hard. At the same moment Kendall exclaimed, in a lucky voice, that he had hit upon something.

"And here are more of them—in fact, here is a whole pile. Ah! I see what they are. They are their instruments of digging—a lot of roughly fashioned shovels."

So it proved upon farther examination. It was now settled that the gophers must employ themselves digging—their object in doing so was the mystery.

"This place," said Kendall, a few moments later, **"does not seem to be dug for the purpose of receiving dead bodies."**

"Strike a light, and we shall see."

He succeeded in doing so after some difficulty, and then

we examined the pit. The instant the light lit up the darkness, I saw something among the earth. It looked like fine grains of silver, and seemed to have been flung all around us. Before our taper went out, I stooped and scooped up a handful, and I saw Ken fall at the same moment pick up something.

"We have learned enough," said he; "let us go."

The light had revealed a sort of inclined plane, by which it was an easy matter to walk out of the pit. It required a few minutes only to do this, and we were soon quietly making our way back to our encampment. Arrived there, we lay down and slept.

In the morning we examined the shining particles which I had brought away. That examination proved to us that during the preceding night we had been examining a GOLD MINE.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOUND—AN ADVENTURE.

Peer-able as it seemed to me, such was indeed the case. Ken fall had visited the mines of California, and could not be mistaken in the particles which we examined. Besides this, he had picked up a small sack, made from the entrails of some animal, which was used to contain the precious dust. It had evidently been left in the mine by accident, and it afforded at once a solution of the action of the three Indians whom I had seen enter the clearing white-cloaked, with the fire-medicine, and exclaiming what objects they carried in their hands in going and coming. The weight of the sacks of gold dust, and regular and steady as appeared those pipes, we were satisfied in regard to one matter. If they were not already immensely wealthy, they soon would be.

This discovery of the existence of gold on the prairie was an almost an important one, and had been a matter of very interest to us. I doubt if Ken fall had found a mine

of ready-coined money, whether he would have allowed it to divert him for a moment from the object which had led him thither. After commenting upon the future results of this discovery, he said :

"The people must be stirring by this time, Marewold, and the duty which you have taken upon yourself awaits you."

"I shall start in a moment. How will you spend the time during my absence?"

"You see we have just eaten the last of our meat. I will go off on a hunt, getting so far into the woods that the noise of my gun will not attract the attention of our neighbors. If I get back before you return, I may probably employ myself in watching the gold hunters."

"Why not do some prospecting yourself?"

"I have no desire to do any such thing. My only object in watching their labors will be to pass away the time until you return. How long do you expect to be absent?"

"I have made up my mind, Kendall, not to come back until I have learned something definite in regard to your sister. I shall not follow exactly the same plan that I did yesterday."

"I was going to advise you to remain concealed near the village, where you could watch all of its inmates. Not suspecting your presence, Enola may be allowed to venture out, but as they rather expect another visit from you I am afraid she will be closely watched."

"It would have been better, perhaps, had I not said this, as it may militate against me. I shall remain around that gipsy camp until dark if I learn nothing before. At any rate, Kendall, do not expect me back till the middle of the afternoon."

So saying, we shook hands, and separated.

I picked my way this time with greater caution than before, for I was determined to follow out the suggestion of Kendall, and make a secret visit to the village.

When I reached the brow of the hill, I turned off to the right, and assuring myself that I was unobserved, I

climbed a tree, ensconced myself among its branches, and commenced my watch. By parting the twigs, I had a full view of every hut, and of those who passed out and entered them. I noticed the same listless, lounging air that I seen the day before. There were men who seemed too lazy even to dig for gold, sitting around, smoking and sleeping, children employed in boisterous play, and women busy at their household duties. More than once I observed my fair fortune-teller passing from cabin to cabin, and others going out and in, until it seemed to me that there could not be one in the village but what had passed under my gaze. But not a sight of the lost sister! Ah, how my heart sickened at the thought, that after all she might not be there. Perhaps she had never been brought to the West, or, if so, she had died years ago. It seemed to me that Kendall could not survive such a disappointment.

After a couple of hours, I noticed that the fortune-teller entered the central cabin more often than the others, and that when away from it, she was continually glancing toward it, as though guarding something within. Her actions were such that I judged she was fearing a visit from me, and was preparing against any surprise. This led me to believe that the prisoner was in this central habitation.

From time to time the men entered and left the village, always carrying their tiny sacks with them, and it was plain they were procuring large quantities of the yellow metal from the earth. At noon most of those outside entered their respective cabins, and I suppose partook of their dinner, as they issued forth again in the course of a half hour.

I now looked for some demonstration that would tell me something of the captive. When the fortune-teller made her appearance, my anxiety to see her movements was so great, that I came within a hair's breadth of losing my balance, and coming down from my perch. To my utter chagrin, she went off with two of the gold-hunters, and I saw nothing more of her for several hours. While I sat watching, waiting and complaining, I heard three faint reports of Kendall's rifle in the distance. This circula-

stance prevented me from obeying my first impulse of descending, and telling him that it was impossible for me to learn anything more.

About the middle of the afternoon, the fortune teller came in from the opposite side of the clearing. It flashed across my mind instantly that instead of going to the gold mine, she had been searching the woods to see whether I was in the vicinity. And such was the case.

She paused a few moments on the edge of the clearing, gazed carefully about her, and then gave a call, the exact words of which I did not understand. As she uttered it, she looked toward the central cabin which I have mentioned, and I fixed my gaze upon it. In a moment, the rude cabin-door was swung open, and a man—he to whom I had first spoken on the morning of the day before—came forth. He stopped, exchanged glances with the fortune-teller, and then turned and spoke to some one within. The next instant Enola Kendall stepped into view!

How my heart throbbed when I saw her! There could be no mistaking her. She was just as I had pictured her—rather small in stature, of a *petite* figure, and graceful beyond description. Her dress was neat and becoming, despite the circumstances by which she was surrounded. A scarlet colored shawl, whose superiority in beauty I had never witnessed, enveloped her shoulders, and her head was bare. Her hair, of jetty blackness, parted over her forehead, and being neither gathered nor braided, it fell down in luxuriant ripples that glistened in the sunlight, at the slightest motion of her head. Her features, I could see from my position, were as her brother had described them. Perhaps both of us were incompetent judges, but they seemed faultless to me.

I saw her cross the clearing to the fortune-teller, and they conversed together for a few moments. All this time the latter kept glancing about her, and resting her head upon Enola's shoulder, as though she feared the approach of some one. It was evident enough that my visit had excited suspicion, and a closer surveillance was kept upon the prisoner.

I debated with myself a moment, and then I determined to step boldly forward and address Enola—satisfied that this course would accomplish as much as anything else. I slid down from the tree, kept concealed until I was within a few yards of the two, and then stepped forward.

"Good afternoon; I meant to drop down here before, but was prevented."

A look of the most intense vexation passed over the face of the fortune-teller, as she replied—

"You were not expected at this time."

"I suppose not."

I then glanced at Enola, as though I expected an introduction; but my look was disregarded. The fair captive stood silent and sorrowful, her dark, lustrous eyes fixed upon me with a wondering expression.

"Well, what is your business?" asked the fortune-teller, with a sneer.

"I came to see *that* lady," nodding towards Enola.

"To see her!" she exclaimed, in astonishment. "What do you want with *her*?"

"If you will withdraw, I will tell it to *her*."

The fortune-teller raised her eyes, and an expression of mingled scorn and hate settled upon her face, that made her beauty terrible. She possessed a terrible temper, and must have been provoked beyond endurance, at having allowed herself to be outwitted by me.

"I shall withdraw, and she will, too."

"Why not hear what the gentleman wishes to say?" said the captive, in a low voice.

"No gentleman would do as he has done," replied the other in a spiteful tone.

"I am not aware that I have been guilty of any rudeness in your presence. If you will explain in what I have offended, I will make amends."

"You can make amends by leaving at once, and never showing your face again."

She took hold of Enola's hand, as if to move away, but the latter stood and looked toward me, as if to invite

me to speak. The other noticed it, and turned sharply around.

"Why do you wait? What can he say to *gipsies* that can benefit them?"

"I beg pardon. I wished to speak to one *who is not a gipsy!*"

A thunderbolt could not have startled the woman more. She did not stir, but her eyes seemed to blaze with hatred. She was silent a moment, and then she gave vent to a scream that would have startled a panther, and which brought several men at once around us—the bushy, heavy-browed fellow, my first acquaintance, being at the head.

"What the devil is to pay now?" he demanded, bustling toward me.

"Kill him! shoot him! don't let him live!" exclaimed the fortune-teller, bursting into tears, from very excess of madness. The man raised his fist, I drew my revolver, stepped back, and cocked it.

"Be careful, all of you!" said I. "I have not touched or insulted one of these persons, and I will not bear a blow from you."

"He is after *her*! I know he is! he will have her. He would like to kill me, I know he would!" fairly shouted the woman, stamping the ground and becoming hysterical.

"Young chap, ef you take yourself off quiet, and don't show your face agin, you can go. But, ef you comes poking 'round here anymore, you'll never see another sun rise," said the burly gipsy, impatiently motioning me away.

"I am going," said I; "but before I go, I should like to ask what you are doing with that person. She is not one of your people."

"None of your——business. Now go."

"*I know*," said I, holding my rifle in one hand and my revolver in the other. "You stole her, years ago, in New Orleans. Her name is Enola Kendall, and, by Heavens, if you do not restore her, you will suffer for this!"

I saw Enola start as I uttered her name, and I saw the

ominous expression that flitted over the face of the one I addressed. It was fearful, and it meant deviltry. I had spoken in the heat of passion, and regretted the words the instant they were spoken. I had revealed the cause of my being there, and must now prepare for the consequences of that revelation. It was too late for regret, however, and without another word between us, I moved away.

“When about half way to our place of encampment, I again heard the report of Kendall’s rifle—this time as far away as before. Not wishing to return before he did, I concluded to take a stroll in the woods for an hour or so. The moment I made up my mind to this, I wheeled round with the intention of taking a direction parallel with the river, but not to approach it, as I should encounter the gipsies. As I turned, I caught a glimpse of a man as he dodged behind a tree, at a point several hundred yards from me. I only obtained a mere glimpse of him, but it was enough to convince me that it was the bushy-browed gipsy following me. I was certain of another matter—he had a rifle in his hand!

If he watched me, as I had every reason to believe he did, he certainly did not suspect from my actions I had seen him. I sauntered carelessly forward, as before; sometimes whistling, and sometimes singing snatches of song, and contriving now and then to throw a seemingly accidental glance behind me. I was satisfied in my own mind that this gipsy was only seeking the opportunity to put a rifle bullet through me. I determined to keep my eye upon him, and the instant he had made any step toward it, to shoot him as I would a dog.

My sensations were certainly uncomfortable as I reflected that at any moment he might be levelling his gun at me. I walked over a half mile in this state of mind, and then I began to speculate upon the probable termination of this adventure. I certainly should not walk all night, and it was not to be supposed the assassin would wait much longer before he fired. I became so wrought up at length that I wheeled around, stepped behind a small tree, and waited for him to come up. The sun was just setting,

and as there were but few trees surrounding us, the horizontal rays lit up the place like the light of a conflagration, but I could see nothing of the gipsy.

I stood some twenty minutes, my rifle cocked, and in a tremor of expectation, until it occurred to me that, after all, he might have returned to the village, thinking I had taken my final departure, and was not willing to shed any blood. I had just reached this conclusion, when the sharp crack of a rifle awoke the stillness, a bullet whizzed toward me, and I fell to the ground!

My fall, however, was perfectly voluntary, for I was not wounded in the least. It seems incredible to myself, that simultaneous with the flash of the rifle, should come the thought that by falling my foe would believe me dead and not trouble me farther. But such I know was the case, and such was the sole reason that brought me to the ground. I lay a moment, and then cautiously looked up, but saw nothing of my enemy. The twilight was already settling over the place, and it would soon be dark. Finally I arose to my feet, carefully keeping behind the tree, and looked about me. A hundred yards away, I saw the gipsy walking leisurely from me, his back offering a tempting mark.

"Now, my fine fellow, it is *my* turn!" I muttered, as I raised my weapon.

Three times the aim was perfect and my finger pressed the trigger; three times it was lowered, and then raised the fourth time. Long I held it thus, but it came down again.

"Go," said I, "it is not for me to take vengeance."

CHAPTER IX.

THE HUDSON BAY TRAPPERS—RE-UNITED.

Kendall and I returned to the encampment at the same moment. He was laden with enough game to last us a

week. I saw his eager anxiety in his face, and immediately related all that has been given in the preceding chapter.

"I have been hasty and imprudent," said I, in conclusion; "but I trust no evil will result from it."

"You have been hasty, dear Marewold, but I cannot see that it can injure us in the least. On the contrary I believe it will be a benefit. It seems certain they suspected your object, and will feel no farther concern about you. There is but one plan for you to pursue."

"What is that?"

"I shall obtain the aid of the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, as I said I should do in case of difficulty. Single-handed we can do nothing. The gipsies must be met by an equal force, and compelled to give up Enola."

"But where will you find these employees? It will be some time yet before the cold season sets in, and it is not probable that any of the brigades are on the Saskatchewan, and it is a long distance to the Red River settlement."

"It is; but if I find no friends this side of it, I shall go there. Nothing but death shall thwart me now. We shall start down the river in the morning."

"It will take a large number of men to overcome them, will it not?"

"A dozen well-armed men are amply sufficient. Besides, they are in the territory of the Hudson Bay Company, whom they would not dare to offend. There is a great deal about that company, Marewold, that people do not understand. It has been in existence nearly two hundred years, during which time its dominion has been extended over a vast portion of the continent. Its territory is divided into four large departments. We are in the Southern one, I believe, as we are still east of the Rocky Mountains. These departments are divided into districts, and sub-divided into establishments, forts and posts, so that you see there is system in the management of their affairs. The highest grade in the service is that of chief factor, or shareholder, which is never reached until twenty years at

least of faithful servitude. Below this comes the office of half-shareholder, clerk, postmaster, interpreter, and trappers. The majority of the men in their employ are Scotchmen and Orkney Islanders—all broad-shouldered, strong-limbed and rugged. Give me a dozen of such fellows, and those gipsies will come to terms in short order."

"It will require a long time to make the journey to and from Red River settlement, and I am really afraid this dreadful northern winter will catch us before we have finished."

"I know the summer season is very short, but I am in hopes we shall get through before it closes. If not, we will try a winter's sojourn at Fort Garry, although," added Kendall, in a grave tone, "I promised my father and mother that I should meet them in San Francisco this autumn, and it will be a sore disappointment to them if I fail to do so."

At daybreak we were mounted and riding down the right bank of the Saskatchewan. We had made a long circuit so as to avoid the gipsy village, and by noon had placed a good many miles behind us.

The same rich, varied scenery met us at every turn. The river was fringed with dense undergrowth, and, in many other places, a few trees only were scattered along its banks. Large stretches of rolling prairie were visible on both sides of the river, dotted with swamps and groves of timber. Overhead, the different varieties of water-fowl were constantly screaming and circling, while we were never out of sight of the larger game of the forest.

When it was so dark that it was unsafe to travel, we built our camp-fire near the margin of the river, cooked our dinner, and sat down to our pipes.

We had smoked but a few minutes when Kendall started up, and exclaimed—

"As sure as you live, Marewold, yonder is another camp-fire—two of them together!"

He pointed up stream as he spoke, and turning my head I saw two bright fires, apparently within a few feet of each other. Their situation was such that they seemed in

the very centre of the stream, which reflected their light as distinctly as a mirror could have done.

"Who can they be?" I asked.

"Not enemies, certainly. Come, let us mount, and be off."

"But are they not upon the opposite side?"

"No; did you not notice before dark that the river bends to the north a short distance down stream? That accounts for the distinctness with which we see their fires. Nothing but the surface of the river interposes before our view. They are either Indians or Hudson Bay men, and we have nothing to fear from them in either case. They must have noticed us also. Hark! they are signaling to us."

A long, tremulous whistle came with great clearness over the water, and was instantly followed by a faint halloo.

Kendall arose to his feet, and repeated both signals. A moment afterwards came the words, uttered with great clearness, and with a full breath after each.

"Who—are—you?"

"Friends."

"How—many?"

"Two."

"Come and join us."

"We will."

Kendall's face was radiant.

"They are white men, certainly. How Providence is favoring us!"

A minute later we were plunging along the river bank, speculating upon the number and identity of our newly-discovered friends. Little did we dream who *one* man among them was, whom we were to meet and have for a companion.

An hour brought us to the camp. We saw figures passing to and fro before the fires, and just as we came up, Kendall said in undertone:

"They are all Hudson Bay men, every one of them."

So it proved. There were fifteen, among whom were

several clerks and a postmaster. The latter, by right of his office, was leader of the party. He was the first to greet us, and it required but a few minutes for us to discover that he was an educated gentleman in every respect.

We exchanged the courtesies usual on such occasions, and then joined him in a pleasant smoke, after which we began an interesting conversation.

The postmaster, Mr. Sangli by name, told us that he was on his way, with his men, to establish a fort or post near the headwaters of the South Branch, the stream upon which they were encamped. He was direct from Fort Garry, and, as we supposed, had had absolute command of all his men.

Ere he had talked a half hour every one of the latter, with the exception of two clerks, were stretched out by their respective camp-fires, and soundly asleep. The latter seemed to be conversing of their far-off homes in England, and were evidently home sick enough. When these were unconscious, Kendall related his story to Sangli, revealing all, and asking his assistance.

He was silent for several minutes, and then said:

“Your experience is the most remarkable one I have ever known. The gipsies, to whom you refer, have been located on this river for five years, to my certain knowledge. They are the only band, I may say, that has penetrated the Hudson Bay Company's territory. When their presence was first reported to us, it was proposed to order their removal; but, as they could do no injury, it was finally decided not to disturb them. During the winter months some of them do a little trapping, and our brigade calls for their peltries in the spring. They are always very humble and meek in the presence of our employees, but will suffer no interference from others. A trapper once told me of a surpassingly beautiful woman, whom he had seen there on one occasion, but I never gave the story credence, and it never occurred to me until this moment. I promise you that your sister shall be restored to you. I shall receive no compensation for such an act of simple duty, but I shall require you two gentlemen to give

me your word of honor that you will keep one matter a secret."

"And what is that?"

"From what you have told me, I see that you are aware that gold exists along the banks of this river. Singular as it may seem, this fact has been known to the company for years, but every measure has been taken to keep it a profound secret with the few, and thus far we have succeeded. Not a dozen trappers among all our men know anything about it, and such as do, could not be bribed to reveal the localities where it exists. You see our resources are the furs and peltries. Should it become known in the United States that gold exists in our territory, we should have an influx of emigration that would result in incalculable injury to us. I do not believe there is a great quantity of the precious stuff, but I suspect those gipsies are getting wealthy upon what they find. The pledge that I require of you is, that, upon your return to the States, you will keep this fact a secret from all.

"I pledge you my honor that I will," said Kendall.

"And you?" said Sanglid, nodding toward me.

"I promise you the same."

"I am satisfied. I do not expect that it will always remain a secret. In the course of time a discovery must be made. After that, of course, you are at liberty to tell what you saw. It is now getting quite late, and as we are early risers, perhaps it will be best for us to turn in for the night."

"Do you set no watch?"

"There is none needed."

Before retiring our friend piled more brush upon the two fires, whose warmth was enjoyable on these cold nights. Lying down with our feet toward the fire, Kendall and I soon joined the trappers in the land of dreams.

They were early risers indeed, for there were no signs of light when we were aroused by the bustle and noise of the camp. The early morning air was cold, and I was half disposed to lie a while longer wrapped in my comfortable blanket, but it was impossible to sleep in the confu-

sion around me, and it was very plain that the trappers had no intention of waiting for laggards. It is the custom of such bodies of men as these to travel several miles before taking breakfast, so that in a very short time they were ready for moving.

Having animals, it was decided that we should keep along the river bank, joining them at their meals, while they would proceed by water, until near the gipsy village, when they were to embark and approach in a body. It was just getting light as the two canoes shoved off from the shore, and propelled by the powerful arms of the sturdy trappers, shot rapidly up stream. A couple of hours later they headed into land, and when we came up were busy with their morning meal. This required but a short time, when they were under way again, and Kendall was already impatiently looking for the gipsy village.

But we did not reach it that night, although we were within a mile of it. Sanglid deemed it best to approach the place in broad daylight, in such a manner that no chance would be given any of them to play any trick with us. Kendall, I am satisfied, did not sleep a minute during the night. I was restless myself, and slept little. Every time when I opened my eyes I saw him pacing backward and forward before the camp fire, talking and muttering to himself, uttering the name of Enola, and at other times earnestly praying that no cup of disappointment might await him.

Morning again, and again we were under way. The canoes moved slowly until within a quarter of a mile of the village. Here the canoes approached the shore, and were pulled high and dry upon the land. Sanglid had acquainted them with what he intended to do, and every one had manifested an eagerness for the adventure before them. After breakfast the guns of all were examined, and the men given their instructions. Under no case were they to fire until they had been assaulted, and were in imminent danger. In such a case, Sanglid himself was to give the order, and they were to shoot only the offending miscreants. The postmaster remarked to me that he had not the

least idea the gipsies would show fight under any circumstances. I was to accompany him, but the whole affair was to be conducted by himself.

The preliminaries being settled, we moved forward at an early hour in the forenoon, the men walking in double file, and with the regularity of soldiers. I could not help looking toward Kendall as we drew nigher and nigher to the village. His agitation became more marked and more painful each moment; and when we caught a glimpse of the cabins through the trees, he turned pale, and stopped.

"Marewold," said he in a whisper, "I can go no further. You take my place—I must see her alone."

I nodded assent as he turned off in the woods, and Sanglid, with a sensibility that did his heart credit, pretended not to see his agitation. The next moment the trappers, with a firm tread, entered the clearing, and approached the cabins.

The surprise manifested by the gipsies at the spectacle of a band of armed men marching up to them, can hardly be imagined. The children set up a terrific streaming, kept up until awed into silence by the greater fear of their parents. The women at first ran to their huts, and peeped out, and seeing us halt, came out again. The men, about a dozen in number, stood sullenly awaiting the words of the leader.

"Who is the chief or ruler here?" asked the latter, looking around him.

The bushy-browed gipsy, still bareheaded, stepped forward.

"Are you the head man here?" asked Sanglid, calmly surveying him from head to foot.

"There are several heads here, but I'm about the biggest toad in the pudole, and am ready for business, ef you have anything particular."

"I have something particular. Do you know me?"

"Can't say that I do," returned the gipsy, scratching his head.

"My name is Sanglid. I belong to the Red River Set-

tlement, and these men are all mine—all trappers, who will do what I command them."

"S'pose so."

"Do you know him?"

Here I stepped forward. The gipsy glanced at me, but did not start or betray any feeling at my appearance.

"Seen him before," he returned, in the same sullen manner.

"I shouldn't wonder. I believe he has seen you before. To come to the point, then, we come on his account. You hold, against her will, a friend of his."

"Who?" asked the man, with a stupid expression of wonder.

"Enola Kendall, of New Orleans, stolen by you several years since."

"No such a gal here," said the fellow, turning to move away.

"Hold!" commanded Sanglid, in a voice of thunder.

"She is here. He has seen her and addressed her. If she is not brought forth in ten minutes, we'll batter your old place to the ground, and run you out of the country."

The gipsy stood for a moment as if irresolute. He looked behind him at the women and children clustering there, and then said—

"I guess she isn't here now, but will be pretty soon."

"That won't answer. If we don't see her in five minutes, I shall set my men to searching for her, and, boys," said Sanglid, facing round toward them, "you needn't be particular about what property you stumble upon."

The gipsy scratched his head harder than ever.

"There is such a gal here, but she has lived with us so long that she won't be willing to leave us."

"She shall decide that. *Your time is up!*"

The threat of Sanglid had been heard by the women, who, satisfied that he would put up with no trifling, had gone into Enola's tent, and at this moment we beheld her walking towards us. Not one of the gipsies spoke a word, but they made way for our leader, who advanced to meet her.

"My fair friend," said he, gallantly, "after this long and cruel separation from your parents a couple of your friends have come to restore you to them. Need I ask if you wish to return to them?"

She turned deathly pale, and endeavored to speak, but her voice failed her utterly. Sanglid saw her condition, and taking her hand, walked with her back to the head of his men. The willingness with which she accompanied him answered his question. Nothing more could be needed.

"She goes with us," said Sanglid, addressing the gipsy.

"Take warning from this. Another such a crime upon your part, and you shall be scourged out of the country, without chance, too, of taking your wealth with you."

Thus we left them, not one of them uttering a parting word, and none but Sanglid speaking upon our side. The men wheeled and marched out of the clearing, he walking at their head, and Enola leaning upon his arm. Thus we proceeded, until we had reached the spot where Kendall had left us. Here Sanglid gave me a meaning look, and yielded Enola to me, moving on with his followers. I stood in silence until they had passed out of sight and hearing, and said:

"Stand here a moment, and be prepared for a great surprise."

She was already surprised at the course taken with her. I moved away with a meaning smile. A few yards away I called to Kendall. He instantly came up, pale, trembling, and nearly beside himself.

"She is yonder," said I, motioning toward her. "You will be alone with her. When your interview is finished, follow the track of Sanglid and his men, where they and I will be waiting for you by the river bank."

As I said this, I hurried on after the trappers.

Such a meeting required no witnesses: neither could any pen properly portray it. There are some scenes too sacred for the eyes of any but the participants. The reunion of Kendall and his sister was of this nature; we drop the veil upon it.

CHAPTER X.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

I found Sanglid and his trappers seated on the river bank, engaged in discussing and commenting upon their late adventure. The former motioned me to take a seat beside him.

"Now that your friend has regained his sister, what course do you intend to pursue?" he asked, with great earnestness.

"Your winter is close at hand, I suppose, and Kendall, I know, is anxious to get out of the country as soon as possible."

"After establishing the post of which I have spoken, I intend to return to the settlement with several of my men. Your best plan, I should say, is to accompany me. The journey to St. Paul from that point can be easily made, and you know the rest of the distance to New Orleans can be accomplished at your leisure."

"Such, I am sure, would be my friend's wish, were his parents in that city; but they are in San Francisco, where he promised to meet them this autumn."

"Ah, that alters the case then. Still I can do something for you. You will, then, cross the mountains, and go down the coast to California?"

"I believe that is Kendall's intention, although it seems to me a desperate undertaking to attempt the passage of the Rocky Mountains with his sister."

"It can be easily done before the winter sets in, if you have a guide. There are numerous passes in the chain, which are safe and available. Now it providentially happens that we have a man with us who is on his way to one of our posts in the Columbia Department, being sent there on business for the company. This man has crossed the mountains several times, and you will find him an energetic and faithful companion."

"Your kindness to us really"—

"Tut, tut! Julian, this way."

A small, thin-nosed, nervous-looking personage stepped briskly up to us, and took the attitude of attention to Sanglid.

"The two gentlemen whom we have just befriended," said he, "intend crossing the mountains to California. If you are willing, they would like to accompany you to Oregon."

"I shall be very glad to have them do so," said he, frankly offering his hand to me.

There was something novel, amusing, and withal prepossessing in this little man, that attracted me toward him at once. After again expressing the pleasure the intelligence gave him, he withdrew with a very polite bow, and left Sanglid and me alone.

"He is a singular fellow," said my companion. "He acts as interpreter and messenger for us, and is one of the most useful men in the service. He speaks a dozen different Indian dialects, and is as shrewd and cunning as the most wily Blackfoot."

"He favors a Frenchman in his manner."

"He is generally taken for one, but he is an American, of French descent, and, by the way, he has spent several years of his life in New Orleans. He is brave, honest and faithful, and will stand by you in danger until death. He has made the journey to Oregon and back again, several times, and on each occasion entirely alone. He was captured once by the Blackfeet, but he asserts on his honor he purposely permitted them to do it, in order to get an insight into their peculiar institutions. At any rate, he made his escape, and I should like to see the band of Indians that can capture him again."

"What is his full name?"

"Julian Martin."

"I am gratified beyond expression that he is to be our guide, and I am sure that Kendall and his sister will never forget your kindness."

"I have done but a simple duty, and the less said

about it the better. But is it not nearly time that your friend returned?"

"I should think so," I replied, looking at the point where I expected his appearance.

We had been an hour together, but as much more time elapsed before Kendall and his sister made their appearance. They came slowly, walking arm in arm, their heads bent, their demeanor serene and quiet, but their faces showed traces of the feelings which had stirred their hearts at this memorable re-union. The trappers respectfully made way for them, and they approached Sangli and myself. The former, in a few words, explained the arrangements which he had made for their journey across the mountains. Kendall, with that graceful earnestness which always characterized him, thanked him and his men fervently for himself and his sister, and gave his solemn promise to every man of the company, that in case he ever could favor or befriend them in any way, he would do so.

There was no cause for remaining together any longer, and the trappers shoved their canoes into the water. Martin, Kendall and I agreed not to ride unless disabled or sick, while the two horses were reserved exclusively for Euola. We then shook hands all round with Sangli and the trappers, exchanged farewells and kind wishes; they dipped their paddles in the water with a cheer; we stood watching them as they headed up stream, then waved a silent salute to them, and we parted, and never met again.

Turning our faces southward, we began our journey to California. Our course was nearly due south, Julian telling us that the pass through the mountains was in American possessions, a long distance south of the boundary line. This path leads directly into Washington Territory, and I believe is now extensively used by emigrants to that region. Our journey, it will be noted, led us again through the Blackfoot country. When Kendall became aware of this, he expressed his fears to Julian.

"Never fear, never fear," he returned, cheerfully. "I will take you through safely."

The srew lness and cunning of this man I have never

seen equalled in the most renowned hunters of the West. Placed in the midst of a dangerous territory, swarming with hostile Indians, I believe he could live for months without being entrapped. He remarked to me one day that he could "scent a Blackfoot" a mile away; and from the consummate skill which he displayed in avoiding their parties, I was sometimes half tempted to believe he spoke the truth. What was perhaps as noticeable in the man, he appeared to possess a good education. This aroused the curiosity of Kendall so much, that one day he questioned him; and this remarkable conversation took place:

"I understand you have been in New Orleans, Julian. How long since was it?"

"About eight years."

"You were there in 1842, then?"

"Yes."

"Do you remember the abduction of Enola?"

"Very well, indeed; and I remember you and your father."

"You do! And you have not forgotten the efforts made to recover her?"

"Not at all, for I was engaged in the hunt myself."

"You were? I am sure that I have no remembrance of you."

"I guess you have," said Julian, with a curious look.

"I am certain I have not," repeated Kendall, after thinking a moment.

"Did you ever get a letter from Cincinnati?" he asked, in a low tone, and with a meaning smile.

"What!" exclaimed Kendall, "did you write there?"

Julian nodded.

"Who would ever have suspected this? Why, Julian, explain yourself."

"Don't I remember," said he, with a laugh, "the measures you took to find me out? How you sent detectives to Cincinnati—how I walked and talked with these same officers—how I met and conversed with yourself and your father in New Orleans? I have not much to explain,

Kendall. I told you all that I know. I suspected the gipsies had a hand in the mischief, and after much inquiry found it was true. The instant I did so, I let you know. I then tracked them to St. Louis, where, of course, all trace was lost.

"This, you will recollect, I also made known to you. I then went in the service of the Hudson Bay Company, which had employed me before. Some time since, when I heard that a band of gipsies had been encamped for several years on the south bank of the Saskatchewan, and learned that your sister was among them, I wrote you another note, which, after several months, I found an opportunity to send down Red River to the States, instructing the bearer to drop it in the Cincinnati post office. This, from what I see before me, I judge has been done."

This intelligence, I need hardly say, filled Kendall and myself with wonder, and awakened a greater respect than ever for our guide. As Singlid had said, he was a faithful, honest fellow, upon whose assistance we could always count, and whose presence was a host in itself.

For the first week or ten days, Kendall and his sister were together most of the time, and Julian and myself took pains that it should be so. We generally kept so far ahead that their words were inaudible to us, and we never purposely interrupted them.

One day we came in sight of a small, rocky peak, which rose several hundred feet from a valley. It was here, Julian told us, that he was taken prisoner by the Black-feet, and to prevent such an accident occurring to the rest of us, he proposed that he and I should move ahead, and make an examination of it before allowing Kendall and his sister to come any further. The latter remained concealed in the forest, while we set forward.

The mount was about a quarter of a mile away, and was reached by us in the course of half an hour. We passed around it several times, and finding nothing to excite suspicion, commenced climbing it. We ascended it, found the "coast clear," and was coming down again, when I stepped upon a rolling stone, and was precipitated about

twenty feet upon the rocky earth below. In an instant Julian was by my side, and had me on my feet again; but I was so injured as to be unable to walk. In this state of affairs, he signalled for Kendall to come up, and I was placed upon my own horse.

And to-day, as I sit down and recall that accident, I thank God that it occurred. It was surely a blessing in disguise, and the most blissful days that I ever spent, were the three during which I was compelled to keep my horse. Our situation being such that constant caution was required, Kendall and Julian occupied themselves with this duty, while Enola and I were left to ourselves. On the first day, our journey leading us over a mountainous country, and there being a natural restraint in our conversation, but little passed between us. But on the second day, we had another wide stretch of prairie, and were more at ease.

"Miss Kendall," said I, "have you any remembrance of ever having seen Julian before this?"

"Yes; I remember his visit to the gipsy village some years since, and recognized him when I saw him again. He says he has seen me in New Orleans, but I have no recollection of having seen him there. He is a fine man."

"He is, indeed, and an invaluable acquisition to our party. You must pardon my curiosity, but there is one point in relation to you which has greatly puzzled both your brother and myself. If not impertinent, may I ask you the cause of the gipsies stealing you, and holding you a prisoner so long?"

"Certainly. It has been a source of wonderment, I know, to my brother, as I suppose it has to my dear parents. I did not know myself until about a year since, when the fortune-teller whom you met, satisfied that my life would be spent among her people, revealed it to me. She said the leader of the gipsies, when near New Orleans, was offered twenty thousand dollars to steal a certain child, and immediately go West with her. The man who approached him with this offer was some sixty years of age, and was once a suitor of my mother's. This step, I am

convinced, was taken to revenge himself upon her. I remember, in going home from school, that a man met me, took me by the hand, and told me that he was going to take me to see my brother. I willingly followed him, suspecting nothing wrong, not even when he rowed me across the river in a small boat. But when I was taken in the midst of the gipsy camp, all my fears were aroused, and I begged, entreated and implored them, on my knees, to take me to my home again. That dark-looking man, with whom the leader of your party conversed, stood over me and threatened to kill me if I made the least outcry or trouble. That very night the whole party embarked on a steamer, and went up the river to St. Louis. Terror kept me silent all the way, and when we got out upon the prairies, I was given liberty to do what I pleased, as I could do nothing at all. From that time until the present, you know for yourself what my lot has been."

"Yours has been an extraordinary fate.—Throughout your long captivity, have you been buoyed up by the hope that you would be restored to your home?"

"It may seem strange for me to say it, but it is the truth. All through these eight years—and long and weary indeed they were—I never for a moment gave up the belief that I should return to my home. I had no idea in what shape my salvation would come, but I knew that it would come sooner or later. My faith in God has never been shaken."

"It must have been a strong faith to sustain you throughout that long period."

"No stronger than we all should have. At first, it seemed hard and cruel that I, who had injured no one, should suffer thus; but I knew there was a Providence in it, and after the first shock was over, a word of complaint never passed my lips. The gipsies really believed I was willing and content to remain with them, and I know when our leader said the same, he was certain I would not go with you. But how sadly was he mistaken. Little did he know how ardently for years I had prayed for that day."

"Were you compelled to endure the same impositions as the others?"

"The gipsies have always been kind to me, and I was never forced to do anything to which I could object. Thinking that perhaps I was to remain among them for several years, I thought it my duty to do them all the good I could. Most of my time was employed in teaching, and impressing them with the truth that they were accountable to God for their thoughts and deeds. I sought to break up the wicked and absurd custom of fortune-telling among them, and succeeded so far that only two out of the entire number continued to practice it. They, however, did it only on rare occasions, and always sought to conceal it from me. A dozen among that people, I believe, are Christians. These were with me in the cabin, and when I came out, and was received by Mr. Sanglid, I had just bidden them farewell. The older portion of the men are very hard-hearted, and would rarely listen to my words. Since they made the discovery of gold, they seemed to have been entirely absorbed in its pursuit."

"Was nothing ever said to you of your return to your home?"

"Not a word. You know our situation was such that it was impossible to learn anything of the rewards offered by my father. Had the gipsies known what they could have gained by returning me, I am convinced they would have borne me back."

"At any rate, your day of deliverance, I trust, has come."

She turned her face, all aglow with hope and joy, toward me, and answered:

"It has; and oh, how thankful I am!"

"Not more so than I am."

I meant that speech for a piece of gallantry, and gave a furtive glance to see its effect; but she received it as she would have received any kind wish.

"I am gratified to hear you say so. You have been very kind and disinterested in my behalf, and I shall always hold you in grateful remembrance."

"I shall ever seek to be worthy of your remembrance, for the consciousness that you deigned to think of me, would be the greatest joy of life."

I never dared to declare my love to Enola at that time. She seemed too far above me, too pure and good to be reached by me, and beside this, I had a consciousness that it would be taking a dishonorable advantage of the confidence which her brother reposed in me. And yet she must have known or suspected my affection at least. I could not avoid showing it in every look, word and action. Kendall and Martin both saw it, and more than once did I detect the meaning smile which passed between them, at some absurd speech or manifestation upon my part.

Kendall certainly manifested no displeasure at this. I often found myself alone with Enola, and I was foolish enough to believe it was sometimes done purposely. Once I heard him speak my name when they were together for a time, and looking toward them, I saw her blushing and laughing, while his face wore a quizzing, mischievous expression. How my face burned when Martin told me one day, in Kendall's presence, that he had heard me speak her name a score of times in my sleep the night before.

After three days' horseback riding, I was fully able to go afoot, and I took my place with my two male companions. Shortly after our passage through the mountains commenced, during which time we kept constantly together. Then it was that Julian Martin displayed his wonderful skill and knowledge of these remote regions. Day after day, we picked our way through that vast dividing ridge of our continent, he walking before us, sometimes leading Enola's horse, and always directing us, and never once did he falter or make a blunder. Down in those deep, gloomy defiles our camp fire twinkled like a tiny star far up on some towering bluff; we moved like insects, while we took our mid-day meal on the rocky bank of some icy mountain stream.

While on the western slope of this chain, we suddenly met a grizzly bear, face to face. Julian was some distance

ahead, and when he and the brute halted, they were not fifty yards apart. Instead of retreating, the courageous fellow cocked his rifle, and brought it to his shoulder. The bear stood silent a moment, and then, with a low, threatening growl, moved forward, directly toward him. The latter remained as rigid as a statue, with his gun sighted and pointed at his enemy's head, while we, breathless and terrified, paused and watched them both. Nearer and nearer came the beast, and Julian still reserved his fire. My blood nearly froze as I saw him still motionless and silent, while his foe was not a dozen feet away. But at that instant, when a collision seemed unavoidable, we observed the flash of his gun, heard its sharp report, and to our surprise, saw the colossal brute fall dead in his tracks!

We hastened forward, and were congratulating Julian upon his narrow escape, when he replied, as he rammed home another charge:

"It wasn't a narrow escape at all. A cool head, and a steady nerve will do the business for one of these creatures any time."

"But I thought a rifle-bullet was not fatal to them," said I.

"If not rightly aimed, it isn't of course. You might put a dozen bullets in his body without his paying the least attention to it; but just do as I did—send it plump through his eye into his brain, and see whether he won't give up the ghost."

"He is a courageous animal, at least."

"Sometimes he is, and sometimes he isn't. That fellow was not frightened, that's certain, but I have seen just as fierce-looking ones as he is, who would run like a calf. I take it that grizzly bears and men are just alike—some are brave fellows, and others are cowards."

We encamped near this spot, and during the evening Julian cut off the claws of the bear to preserve as mementoes of his easy conquest. These claws were over six inches in length, black and glistening, with the ends con-

siderably blunted by contact with the stony surface over which the brute had constantly traveled.

We were now within what was then known as Oregon Territory, and several hundred miles distant from the station or fort which was the destination of Julian. We took a direction due west toward the Columbia river, he having agreed to accompany us to some settlement from which we could make our way without difficulty to California.

It was about noon when we reached the upper portion of Clark river, beside which, Julian informed us, our journey would lead for some distance. We were on the right bank, and ascending the stream, which here takes a northerly direction. It was somewhat past the middle of the afternoon, and we were journeying leisurely along, Julian, as usual, some way ahead, when he suddenly raised his hand above his shoulder as a signal for us to halt. We did so, and he crept forward in a stooping position a hundred yards further, where, rising cautiously to an upright position, he at length motioned for us to approach. As we came up, Kendall inquired the cause of his alarm. He pointed to a sort of *balte* or pile of rocks, the top of which, from our position, only was visible.

"Blackfeet are there!"

"Have you discovered them?"

"I never passed this spot without seeing them. I *know* they are there."

"Why did you take this direction, then? Could we not have crossed the river below?"

Julian shook his head.

"That pile of stones must be passed. If we should try it in broad daylight, we would all be snapp'd up in a twinkling. There is no moon to-night, and we will do it then."

The rocks to which he referred were an irregular pile, on the right bank of the river, and not quite half a mile distant. We ourselves were concealed from view by a rocky ledge over which we were gazing, so that, as Kendall remarked, we were not setting ourselves up to be admired, as we had done in a similar case before.

"But, Julian," said he, with some impatience, "you say that Indians are there, and yet you have not seen them. Now how do you know such to be the case with any certainty?"

"To speak candidly, then, I cannot tell on what I base my conviction, but I am sure that we have enemies among those rocks as I am that we are standing here. It seems to be in the air! I believe I smell them!" he replied, with a smile.

"You are more competent to judge than we are, and the matter of course is in your hands. Would that we could have your advice and direction until we reach California."

"That cannot be, and there is no need of it. Perhaps, if you watch that place yonder until dark, you may discover something that will satisfy you that things are not exactly what they should be."

"I know not what to watch for. Is it the smoke of a camp-fire?"

"You will not see that, neither will an Indian make his appearance, but something else—I cannot tell what—may present itself, and make you open your eyes."

"They are already opened with wonder to understand *why* the Blackfeet should occupy that particular spot."

"I can tell you the reason for that. If you will notice, we are following a new path, but not a *trail*—one that has been traveled by others. Many a band of men has gone before us, and many a one has not passed that pile of rocks yonder. If you are incredulous, look out upon the prairie there, several hundred yards to the right, and tell me whether you see anything that resembles bones."

We did as requested, and now that our attention was called to it, we did see what had first escaped our notice. Yes; there were bones scattered in every direction, as though a caravan had perished there long years before.

"That explains matters. I need not tell you the meaning of what you see. The first time I passed those rocks, some years ago, came near being the last time. I could

never understand why, after avoiding every trap for a month, I walked right into that, and was only saved by an accident, or Providence, as I understand your faith allows no accident in the occurrence of things," said he, glancing toward Enola. "I halted here, just about this time of day, took a leisurely survey of the place, and then rode on, for I was on horseback. Before I was abreast of the rocks, my animal made a shy to the right, and in spite of my endeavors to bring him back, kept getting farther and farther away. I was engaged in tugging at the reins and kicking his sides, when crash, crash, whizz, whizz, went a dozen rifles, and as many bullets all around me, and looking to my left, I saw a whole band of Indians pouring pell-mell after me. I didn't try to bring my horse around after that, but let him take his own course. It was a race for life between us; but my animal was a splendid one, and carried me safely off."

"Ah! I saw something else!" exclaimed Kenall, in an excited undertone, he not having removed his eyes from the rocks, while Julian was speaking.

"What was it?" asked the latter turning his gaze in that direction.

"A boulder just now came rolling from the top to the bottom, crashing through the bushes and undergrowth with a racket which you must have heard."

"Ha! ha! the Indians had nothing to do with that. Look now!"

There was an open space of perhaps ten feet in length, near the upper portion of the *butte*, and, as we looked, we saw a Blackfoot savage stalk boldly across it, and disappear on the opposite side.

"A good sign," said Julian. "If they knew we were in the vicinity, they never would have displayed such carelessness. We need have no fear."

This mass of rocks and stones, I may remark, by way of explanation, was of several acres in extent, and was covered with luxuriant trees and thick undergrowth, so that it could easily have afforded concealment for a large force. As Julian stated afterward, it was much visited

during the spring and autumn by the Blackfeet, and was the scene of many sanguinary conflicts, but in the winter and summer months there was little danger in passing it.

We kept up an unremitting watch of the rocks until dark, but discovered nothing more of the Indians. How many there were of course it was impossible to tell, but it was certain at least there were more than we could afford to engage, even if not encumbered by the presence of Enola. She manifested not the least alarm, and was far more cool and collected than either her brother or myself. When I asked her the cause of this, she replied:

"I have no fears but what we shall pass safely. It does not seem to me that God would bring us thus far upon our journey, and abandon us to our fate. No; He will not do it."

She spoke as if she had no doubts. Heaven bless her! her faith never wavered.

"I have confidence in the skill of Julian," said I.

"So have I, but I have greater confidence in Him who always watches over us. Without His protection we can hope for nothing."

"I do not deny what you say, but beside that we must possess a self-confidence in moments of danger—a faith in our ability to overcome difficulty. Without such feeling on our part, I should have little hope of ultimate escape."

"I agree with you perfectly. We should avoid both extremes. It never becomes us to be idle and impotent. In fact," she added, with a laugh, "I feel pretty certain that if I had a rifle, I should do some service myself in case of an emergency demanding my efforts."

"I could feel certain of that, but trust the occasion will never arise."

"I trust not, because I haven't the weapon."

By this time it was so dark that the outline only of the rocks could be seen looming up in the distance. A half hour later they were entirely invisible, but about this time we observed a star-like point of light glimmer among the leaves for a moment, and then suddenly disappear. Shortly after it appeared near the summit, flickered to and fro like

a fire-fly, and finally went out in the darkness. Nothing more was seen, but it was not long before signals, imitating the call of birds, were heard out upon the prairie, and were answered from the rocks.

This was certainly alarming, and could not be explained by Julian, save that it proved we had more enemies to pass than we suspected at first, and the routes before us were either between them or through their lines, in case the two parties united. Some project, too, was on foot, or else the signal lights would not have been seen, neither would the calls have been heard. The latter ceased, and finally all became silent.

The night fortunately was very dark, there being no moon at all, and the sky being continually swept by heavy clouds. Julian had set the hour of eleven as the proper time for starting. When he judged that period had arrived he asked Kendall to examine his watch. The latter did so by flashing his tinder over its face, and saw that it was five minutes past ! Julian walked first, leading the horse which held Enola, which in this case was mine, Kendall followed with his, while I brought up the rear.

Our progress was slow, for our guide may be said literally to have felt every step of the way. Our great fear was from the horses—that they might neigh or stumble. But they proved as sure-footed and as silent as ourselves.

We had gone I cannot tell how far, for the distance seemed interminable, but we must have been nearly abreast of the rocks, when Kendall's horse suddenly paused. As I looked up for an explanation, a low "sh !" met my ear, and I, too, became motionless and quiet. I endeavored to pierce the deep, inky gloom, but could neither hear nor see anything, save Kendall's animal in front of me ; but I knew Julian had some cause for this, and I remained rigidly silent. All at once I detected a footfall, faint, but with that peculiar heaviness of a weighty body, similar to what an elephant would make in passing over a velvety carpet. Tramp, tramp, tramp, it came nearer and nearer, till suddenly the plumed head of an Indian glided by me, not ten feet distant. I now understood the cause of the

curious, tramp-like sound—a body of Blackfeet were going past in Indian file. The head was followed by another, and another, and still another, until twenty-two had passed like a midnight panorama before me. And the tramp, tramp, went on fainter and fainter, until it went out in the darkness.

During this exciting moment, had one of us whispered, coughed, or moved, had our horses stamped a foot or given the faintest neigh, it would have sealed the doom of us all. I shall never forget the heart sickness I felt when Kendall's horse raised his head and looked off at that dark, shadowy line as it tramped past. I expected every moment to hear him whinney, but Kendall himself had no fear of him. He had been in similar situations before, and had never betrayed his master. The Blackfeet were gone, and we were safe!

CHAPTER XL

A NIGHT ADVENTURE—THE LAST OF OUR GUIDE.

We stood several moments after the tramping of the Blackfeet had gone out in the darkness, and then Julian moved forward, we following as silently and stealthily as before. I kept close to the horse before me, seeing only him, and hearing nothing of the others. A minute later and something soft and cold struck my hand, and then several feathery particles drifted in my face. Julian turned his head and said:

“Now we're in for a snow storm. Hold a minute, and let us get ready for it.”

Enola was wrapped up securely in a large blanket, which had been furnished for her benefit by the trappers while we did the same, pulling them over our ears, and could we have been seen on that stormy night, we would have been taken for so many Indians walking to meet their doom, with their head covered.

“—sh! to the left!” whispered Kendall; “we have come back to those rocks again!”

Such was the alarming fact, and we were probably right among our enemies. It was with a beating heart that I followed the rapid footsteps of my companions, expecting every moment to see those spectre Indians glide by us again.

"See that your gun is ready for instant use," whispered Kendall. "I believe the rascals are moving somewhere around here. Here the devils come——"

Some one struck both of the horses a violent blow, for they reared up, and then with a wild plunge went off in the darkness. Several forms flitted by me, and then came the sharp crack of Julian's rifle, followed by that of several others, sounding no louder than the snap of so many whiplashes in the snowy air. I was seeking out an object among the confused figures before me, when a body struck me like a thunder-bolt, and I fell backward to the ground.

I was not stunned, and rising to my knees, looked about for the cause of my fall. The snow was falling so rapidly that I could see but a few feet away. Thus it happened that, although the sound of the affray was so nigh, I could see nothing of the combatants, but catching a glimpse of what I supposed to be an Indian, I fired and rushed forward. But I saw nothing more, and the noise of the contest ceasing, I was as bewildered and as much lost as if in the midst of the Pacific Ocean.

A few minutes later I noticed that the fall of the snow had ceased. The air assumed a metal-like clearness, and objects became discernible at quite a distance. While debating what step to take, I heard the muffled step of a horse, and the next moment discovered him coming directly toward me. I raised my rifle, and as soon as the rider was fairly visible, aimed it full at his head.

My finger was pressing the trigger when something in the appearance of this rider arrested me, and I lowered the muzzle of my gun.

"God be thanked—It is Enola!" I exclaimed, as she rode up, followed by the other horse.

"Where are they—my brother and Julian?" she asked, the moment she recognized me.

"I know not dear Enola. I have been separated from them."

"Can it be that they have been captured or shot?" she asked, in the most painful anxiety.

"I think not—I am certain they are not," I answered, feeling that it was morally impossible for an Indian to lay hands upon and retain Julian.

"How shall we find them again!"

"I cannot answer you, Enola. There is too much danger in signaling, when it would be as likely to reach the Indians as our friends."

At this instant we both heard a low, cautious whistle.

"That is from my brother," said Enola, with suppressed joy. "He has often made that sound before."

So had I heard it, and assured that it came from him, I answered it.

A few minutes later, to our unspeakable joy, Kendall made his appearance.

"Are you hurt?" he asked of his sister, as he came up breathless and excited.

"Not in the least, thank Heaven."

"And you?" turning toward me.

"Bruised somewhat, but not injured."

"Well, Julian is a prisoner among the Blackfeet, and our danger is too great to stand here a moment. They are hunting for us, and I am afraid there is a long chase before us. The river lies off there to our left, and our proper course is to go up it, so turn your horses heads to the right and follow me."

"Yes, Julian has met the Blackfeet once too often," said Kendall as soon as he dare venture to speak. "But he fought like a tiger, and if my eyes are good for anything, I saw him finish up three of the rascals."

"And what did you do?"

"I must say that there will be three more of them missing when they are counted to-morrow. Would you believe it, Marewold, when I drew both my revolvers, I snapped every barrel without a load going off! I remembered, when it was too late, that I had removed the caps

and forgotten to replace them. Finding them useless, after discharging my rifle, I drew my knife, and used it as I felt was my duty. But how about yourself?"

I related what is already known to the reader, and said:

"It was a singular attack, Kendall—so sudden and unexpected. The first notice I had of it was the shout from Julian, and the running off of our horses. Why did the Indians strike them?"

"That was Julian's work. He saw we were in for a fight, and giving Enola a warning, so that she might be on her guard, he struck both so violently that they went off, and were saved from falling into the hands of the Blackfeet. It was a good idea of his."

"All of his ideas are good; but he has got himself into close quarters at last."

"If he is not killed pretty soon by his captors, there is still hope, for his shrewdness and skill cannot be surpassed. He is too dangerous to keep on their hands a long time."

Here we noticed a curious fact. The ground was free from snow, while not a flake was drifting through the air. This showed that the storm had been purely a local one, covering but a few miles of the country, and in keeping with the singular phenomena so often witnessed in the Far West. By this time, too, we were well used up. Kendall had struggled fearfully in his encounter with the Blackfeet, and could not conceal his weariness.

"I am looking for a resting place," he said, after awhile; "and as soon as I find a spot that we can make answer, it shall do so."

"I will bear up as long as possible, which will be a very short time indeed," he added.

"Mount my horse and ride awhile."

"Marewold, you are as tired as I am, and I shall not do it. Beside, the horse can barely carry himself forward."

This was evident to all, and after going a short distance further in the bed of the stream, we halted in an open space, intending to remain where we were until morning.

The night passed without anything occurring to cause alarm; all of us, including our animals, sleeping soundly, with perhaps the exception of myself. My bruises made

me somewhat feverish, and I first awoke : and the first object upon which my eyes rested was Julian Martin, calmly surveying us !

"I admire the vigilance with which your sentinels stand guard," said he, with a smile. "No wonder the Blackfeet have not dared to approach. Come Kendall, wake up," he added, nudging him. The look of amazement with which the latter regarded him was so ludicrous that he burst into a loud laugh.

"But it's no laughing matter," he added, with a serious air. "There is no telling how soon the thieves may be after us, and you see my rifle is gone. We must cross the river at once."

"But where, in the name of all that's wonderful, did you come from ?" asked Kendall, rising to his feet.

"I have been here an hour or so, and came from the Blackfeet, of course."

"We thought you were killed, or a secure prisoner."

"I am not, at any rate. I will explain all when we have time, which we haven't just now. We must dispense with our breakfast, for a few hours at least."

Enola was placed upon her brother's horse ; and Julian, signaling for him to follow, strode off toward the river, at a rapid walk. Reaching the margin, he ascended it a short distance, and then plunged in, followed by us all.

"A brisk day's travel, and we shall be free from *that* party," said Julian, turning from the extended survey he had taken. "The Blackfeet have some war-scheme on foot. They are all in their war paint, and are concentrating in large numbers to march upon some of their enemies. From what I saw and heard, I judge they are going to attack another tribe."

"As you are at liberty to speak," said Kendall, "suppose you let us know how it is we see you among us, when we had not the least expectation of it ?"

"It's a short story," said our guide. "Just as you got away, and I tried to do the same, I found that I had rather too large a load to carry ; and it really seemed to me at once that I had got the whole pack upon my back. Such being the case, I collapsed, and gave up for the present."

Would you believe it? they never offered to harm me, or even to mind me, so that I felt as comfortable as if housed in one of our forts. There were enough of them, however, that hung fast to my arms and legs, to keep me from getting off; and I found it best to keep quiet for awhile. Well, I was led, or rather shoved, up among those rocks, my rifle taken away from me, while I was made as comfortable as could be expected under the circumstances. From what was said, I learned that other Indians were expected to come in during the night. After they had chattered awhile, and some more savages had made their appearance, the chance came for which I was waiting. They were on the point of blinding me, when I made a jump and run for it, and got off in the darkness. I supposed you had gone up the river, and I took that direction, although I had to wait till daylight before I could find out your encampment."

After crossing Clark's River, our course was southwest, the station toward which Martin was journeying being in the northeastern part of what now is the State of Oregon. While we were partaking of a rather late breakfast, Julian said: "In two days more, I am sorry to say, we shall part company." We looked up in surprise, and Enola asked the cause of his saying so.

"We shall be where there is no danger from the Indians, and there will no further need of my services. Your route south will be plain and easy to be followed."

On the morning of the third day, after we had traveled a few miles together, Julian turned around, and with a smile stopped the animals. We knew what was coming, but we waited for him to speak.

"There is no need of my telling you what this means," said he. "Every mile that I go with you from this point, takes me that far from the fort; but did I deem I increased your danger by leaving you, I would go with you to the mines and settlements of California. But this is not necessary. All that I could possibly do, would be to caution and advise you. So that we must part company. In the first place," pursued Julian, "if any of you are going to turn women, I won't stand it."

"You will allow me that privilege, will you not?" asked Enola.

"I can't deny it very well to you," he laughed; "but what I meant is, that if any of you intend making a pass over this, I shall be off on a run."

"I am not aware," said Kendall, "that we are going to make any foolish lamentations over a separation that is necessary and cannot be avoided. You do not need to be told of the regret we feel at parting with as faithful and true-hearted a man as yourself. Our companionship has been limited, but long enough for us to discover the worth of your character."

"Well, that's enough, then. So here's good-bye to all."

He took my hand, gave it a cordial grasp, did the same to Kendall, and held Enola's so long that I was foolish enough to feel a pang or two of jealousy.

"You have proved yourself a splendid woman," said he, "and I am sure you will be restored to your parents and home. I suppose, in the course of human events, you will get married. All that I can say is, to give you my wish that the fortunate one may be worthy of you—some such a fellow as Marewold there, for instance."

Enola, with a deep blush, thanked him and said—

"All that I can say is, to express the prayer that we shall see you often again; but if we are prevented from doing so in this life, oh, Julian Martin, let us meet above!"

The impressive tone in which this was uttered, thrilled every one of us to the heart, and I am sure I saw something sparkle in the eye of the guide. For a moment not a word was spoken by either of us; then he exclaimed—

"Good-bye!" and ere we could reply, he was running at full speed over the prairie. * * * *

After the departure of Julian, his place naturally fell to Kendall, who had been in this portion of the country before, and who exhibited no hesitation about the proper course for him to pursue. We were not guided now by any emigrant path or trail, but knew that by keeping along the branch of the Lewis River, to the source of the Owhyee branch, we would eventually reach Utah, from which it would be a matter of small difficulty to make our

way to California. It was getting well along in the autumn of the year, but the weather, day after day, continued pleasant and exhilarating, while the journey itself was unvaried for a time by any incident worth recording. While on the Owyhee, the equinoctial storm set in, and we spent a wretched week. At the end of that time the storm abated, and we resumed our journey. We ate our dinner on the top of a broad hill, between which and the Sierra Nevada proper a plain of two or three miles in extent lay. Suddenly a suppressed exclamation from Enola attracted the attention of Kendall and myself.

"When are we to be free from the Indians?" she asked, with an expression of alarm.

"What's the matter, now?" said her brother. "I see nothing of them."

"Just at the foot of the mountain yonder," said Enola, pointing west. "I am sure I saw human figures moving."

"Pshaw! some miners or emigrants," laughed Kendall.

"I hope so; but they were dressed like Indians."

"Can you now see nothing of them?" I asked.

"No; it was an accident that revealed them to me just now. If I am not more deceived than I ever was, three Indians appeared on the edge of that line of undergrowth the base of the mountain, but in an instant they disappeared."

"You and Enola remain here while I go forward and make an examination of the place," said I.

After a few minutes further conversation, this was agreed to by Kendall. He and his sister were to stay where they were while I made my way across the valley for a reconnoissance, and were not to move until they had a signal to do so from me. In case there was cause for fear, I was to ascertain the extent of the danger and return at once. If it were different, I was to kindle a fire, the smoke of which was to signify that all was right, and to invite them forward. With this understanding, we parted.

I found the valley considerably larger than I expected, and when I reached the base of the mountains, the afternoon was half gone. As I had no desire to camp alone that night, I made a hurried reconnoissance, and this must

explain why, as it afterwards proved, it was imperfect. I ranged through the undergrowth for several hundred rods on each side of the spot where Enola fancied she saw the Indians, but without discovering any signs of them. I then ascended a tree some distance up the mountain, and took a survey of the country below me. To my gratification nothing suspicious in the least degree was visible. "There certainly is no need of delaying them longer," I reflected, as I descended, and commenced collecting the fuel for my signal fire. I started it some distance up the mountain side, and piled it up with damp leaves, so that the heavy smoke could not escape the eyes of Kendall.

As the flames caught, and the dark, quivering column rose straight upward, I looked out expectantly over the plain for the appearance of my friends. So many objects encountered my gaze, and not recalling the exact spot where I had left them, I failed to discover their approach. But this caused no apprehension, as I was confident they had seen my signal, and were crossing the valley as rapidly as possible. I gave them two hours as the greatest amount of time they would need to accomplish this; consequently, when over three had passed, and twilight began to envelop the mountain and wood, I began to grow impatient. This, I well recollect, was my first sensation, to which was soon added that of vexation.

It occurred to me that Kendall was dissatisfied with what I had done, and his delay was caused by the caution with which he was proceeding. Then, as I looked up, and noted how rapidly the darkness was increasing, a feeling of vague alarm took possession of my mind. I reflected that perhaps I had been too hasty in signaling that all was right. It was hardly probable, after all, that Enola could have made such a mistake; while it was not only possible, but extremely probable, that hostile Indians were between my friends and myself, and I had failed to discern their presence.

Half sick with apprehension, I made my way up the mountain, and climbed the pine-tree again. By this time it was so dark that the valley was shrouded in gloom, and the flame only of the fire was visible. I looked carefully

around in every direction, and, with a shock that sent a thrill through me, caught the glimmer of another camp-fire!

It was at the base of the mountain, several hundred yards south of me. I instantly descended the tree, and the moment my feet touched the earth, I glanced at the fire I had kindled, and saw several forms pass before it! Walking between me and the blaze, they were brought out in such strong relief that there could be no mistaking their identity. They were all Indians, and I had accidentally saved myself by leaving the fire as I did. This had been discovered by them, and they were searching for me. I stealthily gained a position where I could obtain a glimpse of the other fire, and a sort of tent which they had erected. It required great care to do this, but I finally accomplished it.

My worst fears were realized! The first object upon which my eyes rested were our two horses, secured near by. Searching awhile longer, I discovered Kendall himself. He was standing near them, his head bent, and his arms folded, as if in a gloomy reverie. Around him were scattered a score of Indians, some passing to and fro, others smoking, chatting and preparing their supper. But I could see nothing of Enola, she probably being within the tent. Oh, what would I have given to recall the last few hours! What remorse I experienced at my remissness. How I hoped against hope, when I tried to believe the savages were friendly, and would not retain my friends!

I waited there all night; and in the morning, as I gazed stealthily out from my hiding-place, I saw those Indians "fold their tents like the Arabs," and turn their faces toward the prairie of the East, and pass away—pass away, till lost to my view forever! * * *

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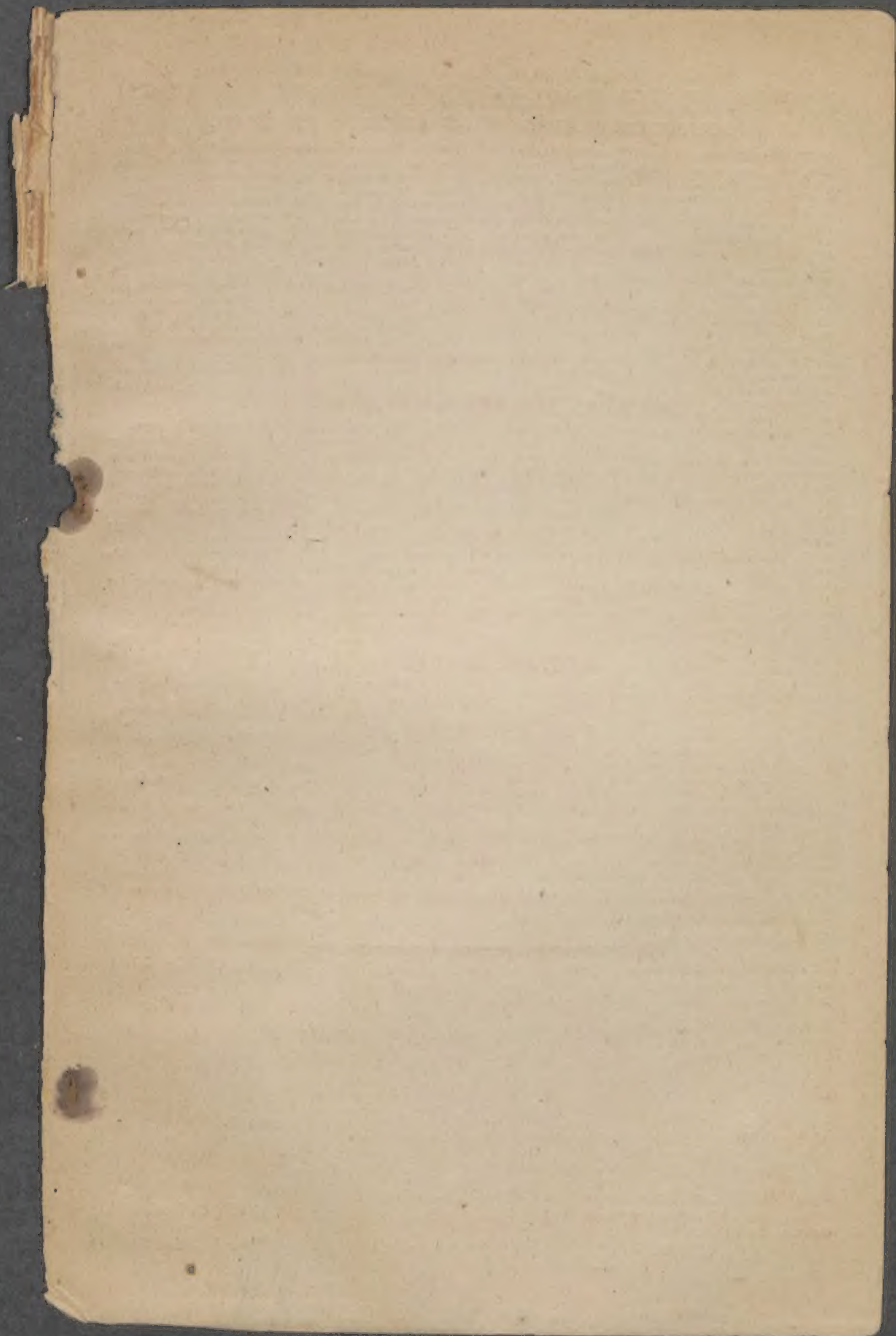
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